

Mr Walker 'crushes' opposition to deal on farm prices

By Hugh Noyes
Parliamentary Correspondent
Westminster

Mr Peter Walker, Minister of Agriculture, scored a considerable personal victory in the Commons yesterday as he crushed criticism of the Brussels farm price agreement. Support for the agreement came from the Liberals, the Official Unionists, and overwhelmingly from the Tory back benches.

There was bitter opposition from the Scottish National Party, Mr James Kilgadd, the sole Ulster Unionist in the House, and Mr Tony Marlow, Conservative MP for Northampton. Mr Marlow, who has a long-standing reputation for his unyielding feelings, put it mildly, towards the EEC, called on the minister to resign.

Mr Walker had little difficulty in dealing with Mr Gavin Strang, who claimed that it was the worst farm prices settlement to have come out of Brussels and that it was sheer hypocrisy to say that important new economy measures were secured.

The minister replied that the overall effect of the price increases would be less than a quarter of 1 per cent on the retail price index and about 1 per cent on food prices over a full year. He added that under the new Labour Government food prices had gone up by 1 per cent every two weeks, although he generously accepted that the main reason for that was the Labour Government, rather than price settlements in Brussels.

Turning out that farm incomes in the United Kingdom declined in real terms last year by 24 per cent, Mr Walker said it was likely that the input costs of farmers would rise this year by more than the £25m provided in the package. That

indicated that in real terms there was likely to be a continuing fall in farmers' incomes.

As for the effect on the consumer, Mr Walker told the House that the beef and lamb premium schemes were continuing. They would directly benefit the British housewife by about £200m.

Beef prices would not rise as a result of the settlement, nor would there be increases in the price of bacon. The price increase for milk would have the effect on the liquid milk price in this country.

As for Mr Marlow, the minister showed no inclination to accept his suggestion that he should resign. Mr Marlow, who had begun sounding off before the Council of Ministers meeting had ended and had allowed his anti-Community enthusiasm to lead him into error.

The minister told the House that substantial adjustments in farm prices were necessary this year to avoid real falls in British agricultural production, that had happened there would have been a considerable increase in costs.

Mr Strang remained unconvinced. The only rational explanation for the deal, he said, was that the Government decided to sacrifice the interests of the British people to help secure the reelection of the French President. The increase in the nation's food bill would bear most heavily on poor families who already spent a proportion of their incomes on food.

Later, Mr Mark Hughes, from the Labour front bench, said he had been authorized by Mr Michael Foot to ask that business for next week should be rearranged to allow a debate on "this heroic capitulation" by the minister. Mr Walker replied that if that could be arranged he would be delighted. Parliamentary report, page 10

McNee attack on the London militants

By Stewart Tendler

Crime Reporters against the police after the recent fire in Deptford have been encouraged by militants who have caused racial trouble elsewhere in London. In the past, Sir David McNee, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, said last night.

Interviewed for London Weekend Television's *London Programme*, Sir David said: "I think if we look at what is happening in Deptford, and what has been happening, we would find there the same individuals that we get at Notting Hill, or wherever there is difficulty. They are also in Deptford motivating and urging the black community to confront the police."

But the majority of the black community were responsible, recent individuals who had taken the heat out of the situation themselves.

Talking in general terms about crime, Sir David said: "A lot of street crime is com-

mitted by black youngsters. However, he would not say it was a disproportionate amount. Asked about allegations of biased treatment of blacks by the police, Sir David said: "We do not want this kind of officer in our midst because he has got to appreciate that we are policing a multicultural society."

He did not think police attitudes to public order had changed, but he suggested that the attitudes of militants had. "If you look at Lewisham or Southall, I think you find that the level of violence used by the militants... against the police was greater than anything I have seen in my 35 years of police service."

It was put to Sir David that many people feared that Mr Blair Peach, a schoolteacher who died in Southall in 1979, was killed by police. He said: "That is a very extravagant statement that could be true, I am not denying that; but the evidence was such that nothing came out in the investigation."

Three remanded in charges of kidnapping

Our Correspondent

Three people arrested on Monday in connection with the alleged kidnapping of Mark Ody, aged 16, a schoolboy, Graveley, Cambridgeshire, appeared before magistrates at Histon yesterday.

William Evans, aged 48, a pupil nurse and former secretary to the youth's father, Raymond Berry, his husband, aged a builder's labourer, both of the End Road, Kempton, Berkshire, and Robert Denny, aged 26, an unemployed male nurse, of Hill St, Prudhoe, Northumberland, were remanded in custody one week.

They were accused of kidnapping the youth, imprisoning him against his will, giving him with Tranxene, demanding with menaces £1,000 from his father, and forcing restrictions were not observed. The three will appear in next Friday at St Neots Magistrates' Court.

Millions of visitors ready to sample the splendours of English country gardens

Millions of visitors ready to sample the splendours of English country gardens have throughout his been eager to share the splendours of their shrubberies, lawns with others. Show-off magnificent gardens to a satisfying British trait and a source of pride and admiration for the horticultural community of others.

The visiting season is about art. There are more than 1,000 gardens in England and Wales open to the public every year, and a separate scheme in Scotland. In the last 10 years it is estimated that 15,000,000 people alone will visit some of their leisure gardens in England.

In a world full of stress, a garden can be a more effective tranquilliser than any pill. Mr Michael Montague, a man of the English Tourist Board, said: "Gardens take us from this nasty world of stress and tension to a world of peace and tranquillity. Gardens have been a form of entertainment for centuries, particularly the large London pleasure gardens of the early nineteenth century, the format of which copied by many thriving cities. They were the

Life and leisure

Cyril Bainbridge

nursery of Sunday band concerts, against which Edward Baines, a Leeds MP once campaigned, believing that the martial music would cause pulses to pound and imaginations to fire with a consequent danger of civil disobedience.

The private and semi-private gardens that are open to the public vary in style and in the opportunities to visit them. Some are rarely closed; others, like the Queen's Gardens at Frogmore, Berkshire, are open only on one or two days a year. This year on May 6 and 7. Another royal garden, Barnwell Manor in Northamptonshire, home of the Duke of Gloucester, has an open day on April 26.

Distinctive features that illustrate the various influences on garden makers are still often to be seen: for instance, the seventeenth-century French and Italian styles of formal garden, with radiating avenues of neatly clipped trees; the natural gar-

Foot and mouth curbs may be lifted

By Hugh Clayton
Agriculture Correspondent

Government curbs on movements of farm animals on the British mainland will be lifted on Sunday night if there are no further outbreaks of foot and mouth disease. Restrictions in the Isle of Wight, where the first British outbreak for 13 years occurred last month, will remain for at least one more week.

Curbs in Jersey, which had its first outbreak since 1974 last month, will be lifted on Thursday. Some restrictions have already been eased.

More than 600 farm animals have been slaughtered in the past month in the British campaign to prevent the disease from spreading. Fewer than 20 of the disease were known to have been slaughtered at the time of slaughter. The cost to the Government in compensation to owners will exceed £100,000.

Veterinary surgeons gave a warning yesterday of the urgent need to keep rabies out of Britain. The disease in France has now reached its closest approach to the Channel.

Mr Edward Chandler, president of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association, said: "We really want members of the public to rat on those people whom they think are smuggling animals."

The Prayer Book being killed by slow strangulation, Conservative MP says

By George Clark
Political Correspondent

One of the chief glories of England, *The Book of Common Prayer*, is being "murdered through slow strangulation", according to Lord Cranborne, Conservative MP for Dorset, South, who will leave in the Commons next Wednesday to introduce a Prayer Book (Protection) Bill.

In the Lords, on the same day, Lord Sudeley, a Conservative, will move the second reading of a similar Bill. Several



Detail from Bellotto's "A view of Verona", which is being sold by the trustees of the Powis Castle estate, Powys.

Rival bids for view by Bellotto

By Frances Gibb

The National Trust and the National Gallery are competing for possession of one of the finest paintings in Wales, "A view of Verona" by Bernardo Bellotto, which is valued at about £700,000.

The painting has been offered for sale by its owners, the trustees of the Powis Castle estate, to settle capital transfer taxes and raise funds.

Neither the National Gallery nor the National Trust, both having made offers, has yet

heard from the trustees of the castle estate and both are concerned, in the case of the National Gallery somewhat irritated, by the delay.

It is hoped by many in Wales that the picture will go to the National Trust, which owns the castle but not all of its contents. The National Gallery is keen to secure a work by Bellotto, nephew of Canaletto, because it has no example of his work.

The gallery has offered £300,000 from its purchase grant (a price that takes into account the tax exemptions granted on sales of works to national institutions). Sir Michael Levey, gallery director, said yesterday: "If we hear from the trustees we shall be delighted and if we do not, one has to be glad that a picture

which could have left the United Kingdom is to remain here."

Sir Michael made it clear that he thought the National Gallery had as good a claim as Powis Castle and expressed concern about whether enough people would see the work if it was there.

"We have yet to discover that the artist has a Welsh parentage," he said. "I do not think the painting is any more part of the Welsh heritage than the English heritage; one has to remember it was not painted for the castle."

The work came on the market in the eighteenth century, he said, and had moved round since then, being shown for a period in London. It had been

in the castle permanently for the past 100 years or so.

The National Gallery was the first to make an offer but about 10 days ago the trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which helps preserve for the nation works that are part of the heritage, agreed to help the National Trust.

The heritage fund would provide a proportion of the necessary cash, its trustees said, if the National Trust was offered the work by the Powis estate trustees.

It is the first time that the fund's trustees have agreed to buy a work not threatened with a sale abroad, and it is believed to be the most difficult decision they have yet had to make since the fund was set up last spring.

Students to campaign against the cuts

From Paul Flather

The Times Higher Education Supplement, Blackpool

The National Union of Students is to launch a campaign involving work-in rent strikes, and petitions to oppose government cuts that are expected to lead to hall closures and fee increases.

Mr David Aaronovitch, the president, yesterday told the union's national conference in

Blackpool that such a campaign was the only way to force the Government to think again about its "short-sighted and irresponsible" strategy, outlined in the recent White Paper.

He accused Mr Rhodes Boyson, Under Secretary of State for Education and Science, of being involved in an exercise of social, economic, industrial, and educational asset-stripping.

Student sent to jail for Jumbo jet bomb hoax

William Gray, aged 17, an American high school student, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment yesterday for starting a bomb scare on a Jumbo jet which had to make an emergency landing on Thursday night.

The Royal Jordanian Airlines Boeing 747, with 368 passengers and 14 crew was delayed for seven hours after making an unscheduled landing at Manchester Airport.

A scribbled note saying there was a bomb on board was handed to a stewardess and the captain of the aircraft, on its way from Amsterdam to New York, landed at Ringway.

Yesterday Mr Gray, of Little Road, Salem, Virginia, pleaded guilty to communicating information which he knew to be false contrary to the Criminal Law Act, 1977.

Mr John Coffey, the Manchester stipendiary magistrate told him: "Your offence is one of the most serious of its kind. It is possible to imagine 368 people and the crew of this aircraft were taken out of their way because you pretended that the plane was about to explode."

"It is difficult to imagine anything more calculated to terrify people in a week where we have heard of armed men holding a plane to ransom."

Mr Noel Williams, for the prosecution said that the captain had to jettison 4,000 gallons of fuel, worth £7,000. About sixty policemen spent three hours searching luggage and the aircraft.

At first Mr Gray denied writing the note, but later admitted it.

Mr Williams said: "The note was a hoax. According to the defendant it was issued in jest; but a considerable number of people were put to inconvenience."

Mr Robert Lizar, for the defence, said Mr Gray was in a party of students from the Church of God Christian School, Virginia, who had been touring the Middle East. Mr Gray and two others began to play a game which resulted in him writing the note.

Computer in every school plan

By Diana Geddes
Education Correspondent

A scheme to provide every secondary school in Britain with a micro-computer by the end of 1982 is to be launched by the Prime Minister on Monday, Mr Neil Macfarlane, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, announced in the Commons yesterday.

The Government will pay up to half the cost of installing the first computer in each school; local authorities will be expected to provide matching funds.

Mr Macfarlane said about half the secondary schools already had micro-computers. He did not indicate how much money the Government would provide, but if successful the scheme could cost the Government between £250,000 and £500,000.

Mr Clive Sinclair, a leading producer of personal computers, welcomed the Government's initiative but regretted that his own company, Sinclair Research, had not been consulted.

His company would shortly be announcing an alternative scheme under which schools could install computers of equivalent performance to those available under the government scheme, but for less than half the net cost, he said. Each computer is expected to cost about £50.

Music fees: The Government yesterday denied reports suggesting that it was planning to introduce legislation to allow local authorities to charge fees for certain school lessons, such as music, and that it intended to replace the examination of pupils at 16-plus by assessments of pupils by teachers.

Mr Mark Carlisle, Secretary of State for Education and Science, said the Government was pressing ahead with its decision to replace GCE O level and CSE examinations by a single system.

Historic houses and National Trust properties are particularly noted for their gardens, but many of the nation's finest examples remain in private ownership.

Some are open regularly but hundreds of others only occasionally, in aid of charity. More than 1,250 garden gates are opened in aid of the National Garden Scheme, which helps retired and needy district nurses.

Useful guides to gardens that are open include: *Visit an English Garden* (English Tourist Board, Dept 4, Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1, 55p); *Gardens Open to the Public in England and Wales* (National Garden Scheme, 57 Lower Belgrave Street, London SW1, 70p, and 25p postage); *Gardens to Visit* (Gardeners' Sunday, White Witches, Claygate Road, Dorking, Surrey, 50p, post free); *Properties Open in 1981* (National Trust, 42 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1, 30p, and 20p postage); *Scottish Gardens Scheme* (25 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh EH1, 85p, post free).

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Albanian nationalists use pupils as riot shield in Pristina

From Dossa Trevisan
Belgrade, April 3

Yugoslavia's Albanian autonomous region of Kosovo has been sealed off after the authorities last night proclaimed a full-scale state of emergency.

The nationalist disturbances, which erupted in Pristina on Wednesday, continued yesterday claiming the lives of two demonstrators. Two policemen were seriously wounded by shots fired from among the demonstrators whose ranks swelled to more than 20,000 when miners from the nearby coal mine and workers from the electric power station in the neighbouring town of Obilic joined nationalist students.

The demonstrators were well organized. Many carried their children on their shoulders and used schoolchildren as a shield, as they marched through the town to the prison, where some 21 students who took part in last week's riots are detained.

Others tried to force their way into the hospital where several dozen people injured in last week's demonstration are being treated, but Army units in armoured cars barred their way. The angry mob then overturned cars and set them on fire.

Throughout yesterday riot police were patrolling the streets and taking up positions on approaches to the region's capital, as well as to three neighbouring towns, which were declared off limits.

Foreign journalists, who arrived in Pristina last night, were kept in their hotels overnight and escorted out of the region this morning after being told that their safety could not be guaranteed.

Today, Kosovo is apparently calm. However, the authorities are apprehensive about tomorrow, when the two demonstra-

Secret agent describes the saving of a President

Washington, April 3.—Mr Jerry Parr, the American Secret Service agent who pushed President Reagan into his armoured limousine after Monday's assassination attempt, received a lengthy ovation today after describing the incident to a Senate committee.

Mr Parr said he did not believe that the President's bodyguards could have acted differently or could be faulted.

"I heard the gunfire and immediately moved the President left, down and forward into the car," he said. "It was an instinctive reaction. I reacted to the sound. Basically, we seek the safest place. For me, it was behind the door and into the car."

Asked how Mr Timothy McCarthy, another agent, had the courage to face the President's assailant and, as a result, receive a bullet in the stomach, Mr Parr had a simple explanation.

Secret Service agents are trained to shield the President with their bodies.

He said that Mr Reagan at first joked about their dive into the limousine, but once the President was able to sit up he mentioned a pain in his left side.

In a space no longer than 10 or 15 seconds, he complained of a problem of breathing," Mr Parr said. "He was getting a bit ashen in colour and then he started coughing up a little blood."

The agent said that he realized that the "blood was coming from the lung. I told the driver to head for George Washington University Hospital."

Mr Parr said that he and other agents "took him by the arm and walked him" into the hospital because there was no stretcher immediately available.

Agence France-Presse.

Secretary of State appeared 'quavering, sweating, straining, and as a man on the edge of panic'

Series of blunders and the knives are out for Mr Haig

From Patrick Brogan
Washington, April 3

Time magazine put Mr Alexander Haig's photograph on its cover on March 9. It showed him striking an aggressive pose with the caption "The 'Vicar' takes charge". Newsweek magazine put him on its cover on March 30, looking worried with the heading "Who's in charge here?"

Mr Haig's authority had dropped drastically in the interval, and dropped still further on Monday when he appeared to lose control of himself after the President was shot.

The Time story began: "The meeting in the Oval Office was private, but it ended in a White House aides invited photographers to snap pictures of Ronald Reagan and his Secretary of State. Explained one staffer: 'We need to show that the Secretary has access to Reagan'. Replied another: 'You've got it wrong. We need to show that the President has access to Al Haig.'"

Then Mr Haig was involved in a dispute with the President over the appointment of a man who seemed unlikely to be able to challenge Mr Haig.

The damage last Monday was so clear that the most senior members of Mr Reagan's staff, notably Mr James Baker, his Chief of Staff, went to great lengths this week to affirm confidence in Mr Haig and their appreciation of his conduct in the crisis.

Now Mr Haig has left for the Middle East and Europe, and in his absence his enemies will have every opportunity to draw the President's and the public's attention to his failings.

In a column in the New York Times yesterday Mr William Safire wrote of Monday's events: "The only top official to choke up was the Secretary of State... he created a problem by insisting on solving a problem that was not acute."

The columnist continued: "He then charged upstairs to the White House and do just the opposite of calming the nation. His voice was quavering, as a stress test would show; he was sweating, straining, and as a man on the edge of panic."

White House aides, who last week were wondering if Haig's power just had earned him a ticket back to private life, are this week trying to shore up his reputation.

With the President's support, such troubles were of no consequence. Now, at the very least, he has lost the confidence of some of Mr Reagan's closest associates. On Monday, for instance, there was a dispute between the Secretaries of State and Defence over the chain of command. The President directed that if necessary the Secretary of Defence would take control.

With the President in hospital and the Vice-President in Texas, Mr Haig announced that he was

Middle East policy shift is demanded by Jews

From Charles Hargrove
Paris, April 3

How will the estimated 300,000 French Jews of voting age cast their ballot on April 26 and May 10? The question is not without importance if, as the polls all show, the outcome turns on a few hundred thousand votes.

Baron Alain de Rothschild, the president of the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives (Crif), said yesterday that there was no "Jewish vote" as such and contested the existence of a Jewish lobby. He said the American pattern, contrary to the Rénouveau Juif, a more radical and activist organization which is not part of the Crif.



French Presidential Election

A year ago Rénouveau Juif launched a Jewish boycott of the polls in order to punish the Government for its pro-Palestinian policy. There were great demonstrations in Paris, supported by politicians and intellectuals, with the slogan "12 hours for Israel".

The Rénouveau Juif, led by a young and dynamic lawyer, Maître Henri Hajdenberg, openly contests the authority of the Crif to speak for the Jewish community in France.

But the denial of the existence of a "Jewish vote" or a Jewish lobby does not imply approval of the Government's pro-Arab policy.

Yesterday, the 43 organizations which are part of the Crif issued a declaration severely criticizing the Government's foreign policy.

It states that France "must support unequivocally the peace gains achieved in the Middle East thanks to the Camp David agreements, and cause a negotiated solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict to prevail."

"Our place is in the camp of peace and not on the side of the Palestinian Liberation Organization which France encourages far too often through its initiatives and its votes in international gatherings."

The document condemns the representation of the PLO on French soil, and the sale of nuclear equipment to Iraq, which could lead to its development of a nuclear weapon.

It demands a break with existing policy towards Israel and the Middle East in favour of a "more lucid, more equitable, and more effective" one. Any other policy will meet with the resolute opposition of the organized Jewish community, it says.

Five months after the bomb attack against the Jewish synagogue in the rue Copernic in Paris, which the police have been increasingly to have been the work of Palestinian terrorists, the Jewish community is receiving special attention from each of the four main parties.

The Socialists have the biggest capital of sympathy among French Jews.

The Communists claim that they are second to none in their struggle against racism.

The Gaullists claim no one has done more for Jewish organizations than M. Jacques Chirac.

Beirut moves to avert threat of partition

From Tewfik Mishlawi
Beirut, April 3

As fighting continued in Beirut and the besieged Christian-populated town of Zahle, 30 miles to the east, President Elias Sarkis and his Government today moved to avert a crisis that could lead to the partition of Lebanon between the Christian and Muslim halves of the population.

They urgently contacted President Hafez al-Assad of Syria, who has had about 22,000 Syrian troops on a peace-keeping mission in Lebanon since the civil war of 1975-76.

Generally known as the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF), Syrian forces entered Lebanon originally by authorization from the Arab League to support the Christian-dominated authorities against the Lebanese Muslim and predominantly leftist forces, who were backed by the Palestinian guerrilla movement.

During the past five years, the Syrians have joined an alliance with their former opponents (the Lebanese leftists and Palestinians), and consequently have become unwelcome by the Lebanese Christian right-wing coalition known as the Lebanese Front.

At an emergency meeting between the Front leaders and Christian members of the Government yesterday it was agreed to urge the President and the Cabinet to remove all ADF troops (mainly Syrian and Palestinian) from the Muslim side of the "green line" dividing Beirut into Muslim and Christian sectors and deploy



Prince of Wales: New Zealanders have given the Prince of Wales plenty of advice about how to stay on a horse, but he had the last laugh when he borrowed a child's bicycle to ride round an obstacle course in Auckland. He did not fall off. In a visit to the Devonport Naval Base a group of Navy men gave him a plaque with a gold-plated miniature ball and chain attached to a foot, to remind him of the traditional naval view that marriage is folly. It was the fourth day of his visit.

Soviet offer to Athens on nuclear arms

From Mario Modiano
Athens, April 3

President Brezhnev has offered Greece immunity from a Soviet nuclear attack in exchange for an under nuclear weapons on its territory.

The offer was made during an interview that Mr Brezhnev gave this week to the editor of the Athens daily newspaper Ned. The text was published here today.

Mr Brezhnev said: "The Soviet Union repeatedly declared that it will never use nuclear weapons against those countries that refuse to build or acquire nuclear arms."

Asked if that declaration could be converted into concrete Soviet guarantees towards such countries as Greece, for instance, the Soviet President replied: "We are ready to go one step further and sign, at the request of a special agreement with any non-nuclear country."

Recent leaks from Washington have confirmed that nuclear warheads have been deployed in Greece.

State Department believes crisis in Poland is still very serious

From David Cross
Washington, April 3

While the Administration here continues to watch the situation in and around Poland with apprehension, Mr Mieczyslaw Jagielski, the Polish Deputy Prime Minister, today concluded his search in Washington for economic aid.

During two days of talks with members of the Administration, including Mr George Bush, the Vice-President, the Polish leader was told that the United States would provide his Government with surplus dairy products worth \$70m (£30m) at cut-rate prices. The butter and dried milk is designed to help Poland overcome its dire food shortages.

Senator Howard Baker, the Republican leader of the Upper House, told reporters today that the State Department believed that the Polish crisis was still very serious and that the prospect for a peaceful outcome was clouded.

After a meeting with Mr Alexander Haig, the Secretary of State, Senator Baker said the Administration was concerned about "the apparent growth" in Russian troops around Poland.

The senator's remarks confirmed the thrust of yesterday's statement by Mr Caspar Weinberger, the Defence Secretary, that the possibility of Soviet military intervention in Poland had increased in the last 24 to 48 hours. Mr Weinberger, who was speaking to the Senate budget committee, said that the situation had worsened this week and was "very serious" now.

According to well-informed officials, several factors have caused the Administration here particular concern since the agreement earlier this week by Poland to provide its Government with surplus dairy products worth \$70m (£30m) at cut-rate prices. The butter and dried milk is designed to help Poland overcome its dire food shortages.

Second, the Soviet propaganda machine in Moscow has now for the first time begun to criticize members of the Polish Communist Party itself rather than those not directly involved in the running of the country.

A similar pattern of propaganda attacks emerged before the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Finally, the Pentagon has information which indicates that everything is now ready for the Russians to move into Poland at the drop of a hat if they so require.

Poles tell banks they cannot pay debts

By Michael Prest
Poland has told Western banks that it will not be able to meet payments on its loans due in the second quarter of this year, a leading German banker said yesterday. As a result, Poland may only pay \$5,700m (£2,500m) to banks and governments in 1981, instead of about \$7,500m.

At the same time, senior bankers in London have confirmed hints dropped last Wednesday by Polish bankers that their country is interested in rejoining the International Monetary Fund. But Poland has not yet formally approached the IMF.

Mr Christoph von der Decken, a member of the management board of Dresdner Bank, one of Germany's biggest financial institutions, said yesterday that his and other German banks had been informed by the Poles that about \$1,900m in capital payments due between now and June could not be met.

He added that the remaining two thirds of this year debt would have to be rescheduled. The notice given by Poland explains why the banks were reported on Thursday to be considering a plan whereby Poland would be granted a moratorium on interest payments up to the end of April.

The alternative was to grant the \$1,000m bridging loan which Poland had requested. But banks are very reluctant in

Polish party leaders criticized

Warsaw, April 3.—Polish Communist Party leaders can under heavy criticism at meetings of local party organizations throughout the country as they embarked on their congress election campaign, official media reported today.

Delegates to the plenary session of the Central Committee last Sunday had accused the ruling Politburo of being out of touch with rank-and-file opinion and took the unusual step of ordering them to suit their local parties.

The national consultative commission of the independent union organization Solidarity was meeting in its Gdansk headquarters to plan the next stage of negotiations with the government.

The official news agency Pae said there was "an open and polemical discussion" at moments broke into sharp disputes when Mr Stanislaw Kania, the Party First Secretary, met party activists in Warsaw last night.

Party members spoke out against what was called the excessive use of the term "counter-revolution" and "anti-socialism" words frequently used by the authorities to describe elements in Solidarity.—Reuter and Agence France-Presse.

US to sell Saudis four advanced warning planes

Washington, April 3.—The Reagan Administration has decided to sell four highly sophisticated Advanced Warning and Command System aircraft, known as Awacs, to Saudi Arabia or use by its Air Force, according to Pentagon and White House sources.

The Administration plans to present the sale to Congress shortly, together with the proposal to sell the Saudis equipment for increasing the capabilities of the F-15 fighters they are getting from the United States. The proposal will be opposed by the strong pro-Israel lobby in Congress.

Mr Alexander Haig, the Secretary of State, is expected to inform the Saudi Government of the decision during his

Ottawa MPs in constitution truce

From John Best
Ottawa, April 3

A two-day ceasefire has been declared in the parliamentary battle over Canada's constitution. But the conflict is far from over.

Mr Joe Clark, leader of the Conservative opposition in the Commons, announced last night that Tory MPs had agreed to call off their blockade of House business, which had gone on for nearly two weeks.

The truce was decided on at a special party caucus, to allow the Commons to push through an urgent Bill authorizing \$14,000m (£5,148m) in government borrowing.

However, after the ceasefire ends on Monday night the Tories presumably will resume the stalling tactics—endless points of order and questions of privilege—which have been used to prevent the Liberal government from proceeding with a motion that would cut off debate on the constitution.

News Analysis Militants question Walesa leadership

From Timothy Garton Ash
Berlin, April 3

The storm which broke at this week's acrimonious meeting of Solidarity's national committee has been gathering for some months. The union leadership preferred to wash its dirty linen behind closed doors, excluding journalists from the most fractious part of its proceedings, but first-hand accounts have filtered through.

Solidarity was beginning to resemble a feudal monarchy, the historian Mr Karol Modzelewski complained, tendering his resignation as press spokesman.

The king, Mr Lech Walesa, governed with his court and his parliament, the national committee. But too much power was concentrated in the hands of the king and the king's men.

His criticism of the way Monday's negotiations with the Government were conducted was widely shared. Many of the approximately 40 regional representatives who make up the committee felt the union could have won more than the vague promises contained in Monday's agreement.

If Mr Walesa had not been intimidated by the threat of Soviet tanks.

In private they disparage the most important of the king's men, Professor Bronislaw Geremek and Mr Tadeusz Mazowiecki, two Roman Catholic intellectuals who have been in

حکومت الاصل

Thailand's military co up comes to an ignominious end after colonel's car stops at traffic lights

From David Watts
Bangkok, April 3

Colonel Prachak Sawangchit's car drew up at a red light near the royal palace this morning. His driver's immaculate road manners set off a chain of events that quickly and ignominiously ended Thailand's three-day military rebellion.

As the colonel's car stood waiting for the light to change a lorryload of troops loyal to General Prem Tinsulanonda, the Prime Minister, arrived at the junction. Troops poured out of the lorry and called through a loud hailer on the colonel and his staff of two to surrender.

There was an exchange of fire which hit the coup's only victim, a motorcyclist, and the flamboyant and pugnacious commander of the Second Infantry Regiment gave himself up. Yesterday the colonel had been talking of a fight to the finish.

Within two hours of the colonel's capture General Prem's forces, flown into Don Mueang airport overnight from his headquarters at Korat in the north-east, had retaken key points in Bangkok, including the radio station, without serious violence.

The leaders of the coup, General Sant Chitpaibma and General Vasin Isarangkun na Ayuthaya, Commander of the First Army Region, were allowed to escape in the tradition of bloodless coups in Thailand.

Two helicopters lifted off from the centre of Bangkok taking them into exile as over-head Air Force reconnaissance aircraft circled.



Mr Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese Vice-Chairman, chatting with Lord Carrington yesterday.

China pledge on colony's investments

From David Bonavia
eking, April 3

Mr Deng Xiaoping, the Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, today told Lord Carrington that investors in Hong Kong need not worry about the future of the colony. "This is the official position of the Chinese Government," Mr Deng said. "Even if there were some change in 16 years' time (when the lease on the economically vital new territories expires), the interests of investors will not be harmed."

Informed sources in the British party said Mr Deng gave no more specific assurances, but a telegram has been sent to the Hong Kong Government with news of this reiteration of China's long-standing position. It is understood that the Foreign Secretary did not raise the question of the sale of about £40m worth of British military electronics equipment which Marconi representatives here are attempting to finalise. Yesterday Mr Zhao Ziyang, the Chinese Prime Minister, repeated the Government's invitation to the Queen to visit China, but no firm date has been discussed. Mrs Margaret Thatcher, however, is thought likely to visit China next year. The Hong Kong question is becoming obsessive in Anglo-

Chinese relations, as the British authorities continue to press for some definite statement of Chinese intentions for the expiry of the lease in 1997. Mr Deng told Lord Carrington today: "We have a billion people. It is understood that we are opposed to five or six million. Observers believe the Chinese have themselves not decided how they will solve the Hong Kong problem, in view of the colony's extreme usefulness as a source of foreign exchange and exports. Lord Carrington is understood to feel that the reiteration of China's favourable attitude towards Hong Kong, to someone holding his office, is in itself an encouraging sign. The British delegation leaves tomorrow for a short visit to Xian in north-west China.

Installation at simple ceremony in Bangui

From Ian Murray
Bangui, April 3

President David Dacko was sworn in today as the duly elected head of state of the Central African Republic in a simple ceremony in deliberate contrast to the pomp surrounding the coronation of his predecessor, the former Emperor Jean Belokassa.

On taking office he named Mr Bozanga, the Minister of Justice, as his first Prime Minister. It will be his task to form the new Government. As yet there is no date set or even hinted at for the legislative elections which constitutionally should now follow.

This morning's ceremony was performed before an invited audience of diplomats and local dignitaries and was broadcast live by the state radio. The crowd outside the hall, where the swearing-in took place, was outnumbered by the red-jacketed band and the company of troops escorting the national flag.

Outside the entrance a group of local folk dancers performed to the sound of the tom-tom, while over it all blared the brass music of the "Chant de Depart", the martial music which is the favourite of President Giscard d'Estaing of France.

The route from the presidential palace to the hall, which is on the outskirts of Bangui near the airport, was blocked by police at every intersection for an hour or more before the President's car passed through.

At the junction leading to the shanty town of Kilomètre 5, each corner was manned by a pair of riot police, but otherwise there was no indication of the strike call which had been made by opponents of the President the previous day.

It was symbolic that the swearing-in ceremony took place in the building now used by the French Barracuda intervention force, which has been keeping order in the Central African Republic since the fall of the emperor. Nevertheless, the French soldiers, usually very much in evidence at the barracks, were discreetly out of sight with even their Jeeps either on patrol or hidden at the back.

Refugees from 'earthquake' leave Hong Kong

From Our Correspondent
Hong Kong, April 3

More than 20 of the 90 junks which have brought nearly 5,000 Chinese into Hong Kong since Monday have left their detention centre to return home.

The crisis is easing and the authorities will now declare a deadline for departure, after which all refugees who remain will be disembarked by security forces, taken to the border and handed over to the Chinese.

Yesterday, 134 refugees were repatriated and today another group of 155 from five boats will be returned. Chinese officials are cooperating fully in the operation.

This action and loud-speaker broadcasts to the crowded junks, giving assurances from Canton that the fears of an impending earthquake which provoked the refugees, are groundless, are obviously persuading more refugees to go home.

President Chun commutes Kwangju death sentences

From Jacqueline Reditt
Seoul, April 3

Death sentences recently confirmed by the Supreme Court on three South Koreans were today commuted to life imprisonment in a clemency measure approved by President Chun Doo Hwan.

The clemency order extended to a total of 83 people convicted in connection with last May's uprising in the south-western provincial capital of Kwangju, in which 189 people died.

Twenty had their sentences reduced and 57 others were released. Three whose sentences were already suspended have now had their civil rights restored.

Among the three whose death sentences were commuted today was Chong Dong Nyon, a student aged 38, whose written confession of having received money to organise student demonstrations in Kwangju,

was produced by the prosecution as key evidence in the trial of Mr Kim Dae Jung, the dissident leader.

When President Chun first took control of the country during a period of domestic instability, he imposed harsh and unpopular restrictions, extending martial law and banning all political activity.

But in recent months he has considerably eased restrictions and put into effect a reconciliation policy. In January, he commuted Mr Kim Dae Jung's death sentence to life imprisonment. To mark his inauguration last month, he offered amnesty to 5,221 political and other prisoners.

Of those involved in the Kwangju uprising, 306 had their sentences reduced or suspended earlier, and this latest measure means that leniency has been extended to all those convicted for their involvement in the incident.

Sri Lanka leader withdraws defamation claim

From Our Correspondent
Colombo, April 3

President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka today agreed to withdraw a 2m rupees (£50,000) defamation claim against Independent Newspapers Ltd after they agreed to publish an apology and pay 50,000 rupees to two charities named by him.

The English-language morning paper of the group has already apologized unreservedly for yesterday's shooting in a telephone call to Ritzan, the Danish news agency.

Reuters News Agency in Beirut then received a telephoned statement from the so-called Justice Commandos for the Liberation of the Middle East denying that the action was connected with the Secret Army of the South and claiming full responsibility.

Road crash kills 15

Maseru, April 3.—Fifteen people were killed in a road accident at Mantsonyane, Lesotho, last night.

Ecuador and Peru open mountain border

Huacillas, Ecuador, April 3.

Ecuador and Peru yesterday reopened their frontier in the Condor Mountains after a two-month closure which followed border fighting earlier this year.

Ecuadorians from the small border town of Huacillas joined Peruvians from Aguas Verdes for celebrations on a bridge separating the two countries.

The border was closed and trade paralysed when fighting erupted in January after Peru accused Ecuador of occupying abandoned military outposts inside its territory. Ecuador has historically claimed a large area of northern Peru.

The reopening of the border comes after a demilitarization agreement between the two A ceasefire and separation of forces was monitored by the United States, Chile, Argentina and Brazil, guarantors of a Peru-Ecuador peace treaty of 1942.—Reuters.

Japanese unions launch ritual spring offensive

From Peter Hazelhurst
yo, April 3

In an annual ritual in Japan, spring labour offensive, an today when more than a million workers launched a campaign for higher wages.

By want a marginal increase of 2 per cent above the offers leading industrialists.

As the most serious incidents in industrial unrest this year, the action was ineffective. Hundreds of ticket collectors on an National Railways went strike for two hours during rush hour this morning. But picket lines were ineffective.

Most passengers purchased their tickets and deposited their bags on trays at unstaffed exit gates of stations.

Other incidents thousands of workers took part in demonstrations during their lunch today and then dutifully returned to work.

Thousands of members of several trade union federations, including the Japan Harbour Workers Union and the Metal Engineering Workers, were out on partial strikes for maximum period of two days.

Turkish diplomat recovers after Copenhagen shooting

Christopher Follett
Copenhagen, April 3

Cavit Demirel, the First Secretary of the Turkish Embassy here, was recovering actively in a Copenhagen hospital today, after undergoing surgery to remove six bullets from his kidneys, throat and groin. He was shot by members of the Armenian underground organization at his home last night. Police are still hunting for the gunmen.

The French Embassy here in protest against insufficient protection from the French Government for Turkish diplomats based in France where five Turkish diplomats have been shot dead by Armenian groups since 1973, two of them last month.

An Armenian group calling itself the Secret Army of the East first claimed responsibility for yesterday's shooting in a telephone call to Ritzan, the Danish news agency.

Reuters News Agency in Beirut then received a telephoned statement from the so-called Justice Commandos for the Liberation of the Middle East denying that the action was connected with the Secret Army of the South and claiming full responsibility.

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Saturday Review

She took it so well

A short story by Brian Glanville

"But she took it so well, she's taken it so well!" Each chant at me in their hard, bright voices; up and down Hampstead High Street, in the greengrocer's, the fishmonger's, the coffee shop. "So well, so well she's been absolutely marvellous!" till I nearly wondered if praise like this, from people like these, implied the opposite of what was said. In their narrow, sharply lit, protected world, there seemed no more room for sensibility than there was for mud in the hall.

Could she be taking it too well, or as easily, in its different way as she had taken the death of Mr George? I was ashamed of the thought, and tried to chase it away; the bereavement had been so recent, so sudden and so horrible. If she could come to terms with it in any way at all, it must be good.

Peter had been killed in the Temple. An Arab had shot at another Arab, and hit him instead as he walked out of his chambers, quite unwittingly, behind the quarry, whom he had not even known. The man who should have died was a refugee from a Middle Eastern tyrant, a former minister who had left and denounced the regime. The gunman was one of those who seemed to swarm all over Europe, now, murdering their victims in Rome, in Paris, even London, where such things had once been unthinkable. So Peter's death was random, senseless and appalling, the more still because he was what he was, an absolute idealist, always away somewhere or other to assist Czech dissidents, to stop black guerrillas being hanged by the South Africans, to plead some prisoner's case at the International Court, never taking a penny for any of it. He was a QC, but you felt he crammed his work at the bar into the interstices of what really mattered to him.

"He's such an altruist", Helen used to say, with that little lift of the head she gave, as though looking up above her audience and into a spiritual stratosphere. "He shouldn't do all the things he does, but who can stop him?" I sometimes had the feeling she would like to.

They lived well enough, in their house on the Heath, furnished and decorated in Helen's arid good taste, though hung with pictures Peter had bought from exhibitions. There was a boy at Westminster and another at St Paul's. For their holidays, they would take a boat to West Wittering; he had enough, Peter would say, of being abroad. He was forever flying, and when he did, Helen would fly with him, while the boys and a succession of au pair girls fended for themselves. "She should be called Ruth", my husband once said to me, "whither thou goest, I shall go."

"He just can't bear to be away from her", said the chatterbox in the High Street, "he adores her", but I was not sure. He did adore her, you could tell that from the way he looked at her, the way he was at ease with her, yet she never seemed at ease with him. I sensed, at times, a touch of desperation to her love.

"Peter and I..." she'd say. "We think... We both believe..." He never contradicted her; he merely smiled. Now and again, at dinner parties or at cocktail parties, I'd catch her looking at him with a kind of fear, perhaps a fear of losing him, and now, he'd gone. Not to another woman, but to a bullet.

She worked, part time, in the Citizens' Advice Bureau. I could imagine her sitting behind a table in one of those bleak little rooms, dispensing hearty common sense, telling people they should pull themselves together, sticking always to the letter of the law, where Peter was concerned with the spirit.

"Isn't she beautiful?" her friends would ask me in the High Street. "She looks so beautiful, despite it all."

What they meant, I thought, was she looked well; she had never been beautiful. If anything, the word was healthy, with her fair, curly hair, her pink complexion, her sturdy legs bared for squash, which she played not with Peter but her sons. I'd watched them once, when the boys were much smaller. "Come on, come on!" she'd cried, laughing with unrestrained delight when she had scored a point. "Come on, keep up! You can do much better than that!" When she couldn't play, they played with Mr George.

"Oh, I love playing with Mr George!" the younger boy had told my children, once, eyes shining with remembered joy. "He's so good, he shows you things!" to which Helen, who was there, had sharply replied, "You like playing Mr George because he lets you win! He plays pet ball!"

Mr George was very old, even when I first met him. No one knew quite how old, but he'd gone Over The Top in the Great War, and was supposed to have won a medal. Everyone loved Mr George just as, in a different way, they loved Peter Melton. "My dear," said the Hampstead Ladies, "he's one of Helen's discoveries." She had "discovered" him in the Citizens' Advice Bureau. He was poor and he was frail, he had been widowed ten years ago, he lived in a chilly furnished room behind the Finchley Road, and gallantly kept up appearances. What Helen did was find him things to do. "It gives them dignity", she said. "And of course, a little money. We don't always need to use him when we do but they like to feel they're needed."

Mr George could meet many different needs; he was willing and he was versatile. He could cook and drive and garden. He was, as Helen said, "quite scrupulously clean and honest; a tiny man who looked as if he'd wizened in the sun, whose jauntiness told of saloon bars, crude jests with commercial travellers but whose background was in fact, pathetically, something better; a minor public school, achievements as an athlete, soldiering, gliding, mountaineering."

"The children love listening to him", Helen said. "They believe everything he tells them."

My children love it, too, when he came to us the times when Helen didn't need him. She was quite generous with him, happy to farm him out, to sub-contract him. "He needs the occupation." He, in turn, was loyal as a dog to her and Peter, though clearly more attached to Peter than to her. Now and again, in his crisp, curt embarrassed way, he would let something slip.

"Doesn't believe in cleaning mushrooms, the good lady. Just throws them in the stew."

Behind the façade of cleanliness and order, one glimpsed another world of sluttiness; unhygienic and grimy. When he knew he had been indiscreet, Mr George's mouth would shut tight in his seamed little face.

ling snow off the front path, humping shopping through the windy streets.

"I've been better", he admitted, outside Sainsbury's, one day.

Then stay in bed, Mr George, I begged.

"No, no, duty calls", and he coughed. "It's nothing much. Just a tickle."

A day later he was in hospital with pneumonia; two days more, and he was dead. Helen sent a massive wreath of lilies to the funeral, but she did not come, while Peter was in Ghana, defending a man on trial for his life. Mr George's brother paid for the funeral; we rode in the hearse together, he and I, the solitary mourners. He'd come up from Gloucestershire, a farmer, younger than Mr George, plumper, less buffeted by life. He had Mr George's soft, doggy eyes, his brisk voice, but none of his resignation. "Wife wanted to come", he said, apologetically, "but couldn't get away". I knew she hadn't wanted to come, had probably found poor Mr George a boring nuisance.

We stood by the grave in the little green churchyard while sleep blew over us and a clergyman who'd never known Mr George talked about his splendid qualities. The Melton's wreath lay there, luxuriously out of place, like an orchid in a potato patch.

"Never had much luck", Mr George's brother said. Peter's funeral was very different. It was held in Belgrave. The church was packed with prosperous, elegant, distinguished people, discreet and solemn in their grief. A fashionable clergyman with wavy blond hair and a translucent albin spoke of Peter's benefactions to the underprivileged. "This is not a loss", he said, "not only to his loving family, not only to his many and devoted friends, but, I may truly say, to humanity at large." I thought it true, but wished it had been said by someone else.

Helen, in her widow's weeds, looked quite extraordinary. There was a martyred radiance about her. I had not seen her since the murder, though I'd tried to from the moment that I'd heard about it, heard by chance on a news bulletin while working in the kitchen, listening mindlessly to mindless music, experiencing no more than the generalized sense of shock and disgust when I heard that "a prominent lawyer was shot dead today outside his chambers at the Temple in Central London," only to be frozen, stunned and horrified, when they gave Peter's name.

Helen would not see anybody then, and I could not blame her. Any phone call was intercepted by the operator, later answered by her au pair, or one of her sons. "She's very sorry, but she says she'd rather not speak to anybody at the moment. She says she hopes you'll understand." Of course I understood. I sent her a long, emotional letter, aware, with each word I wrote, of the uselessness of it, overwhelmed by a sense of futility, of the appalling pain which Helen must be suffering.

There, at the funeral, in her exquisite black dress and long, black coat, she seemed to have been purged by pain. Now and again, she even smiled; a kind of wry, resigned, forgiving smile; the smile of a saint, I ached for her, yet at the same time there was something else, something wrong, a feeling I could not admit to consciousness, so that it lingered just beneath the threshold. I knew only that she should have looked... different.

She seemed scarcely even to have lost weight. Her face, handsome at its best and never pretty, was still full, the skin still clear and fresh. She looked, as always, healthy, like a Roman matron, serene but not sensual.

Afterwards when I came to her and kissed her, she turned her cheek to me with the same forgiving smile, the movement quick and studied. "Thank you, darling, thank you." There was no intimacy, I resented it, and felt ashamed of myself.

Then the interviews began.



Illustration by Robin Harris

There were many of them; the first in a popular daily paper beneath the headline, This woman with forgiveness in her heart.

"Helen Melton" it said, "feels no hatred, not even for the thug who shot down her beloved brilliant husband at the peak of his philanthropic career. People like that deserve pity," she says. "They are pawns in a brutal, sordid game. I know he didn't mean to kill my husband, and I know my husband wouldn't have wanted me to hate him. He was a man who lived his life for other people. He loathed all kinds of cruelty."

In the middle of the page there was a large photograph: Helen at home, with her two sons, one on either side of her, sitting on a sofa. She had an arm round each one's shoulder, but regarded neither. Her smile, displaying fine, white teeth was for the camera.

At last, I got to see her. Like others, I had offered to cook, to shop, to feed her children; but like others, I'd been courteously refused. She could manage, she said. When, on the telephone, I talked to her, pity sympathy was met with a pause, a kind of short, ritual silence, implying grief unspoken; then she'd speak again, quite brightly, as if nothing had been said. It was a new Helen that one had to get used to. We had never been close, it was true, but we'd conversed, we had found a *modus vivendi*. There were schools to talk about, and shopping. There were children, au pairs, and Mr George. Now and again, one broke down on the shoals of her rigidity; there were passing moments when she gaffed, knew she had

gaffed, but went on with a quick and sickly smile. I wasn't one of Helen's group, one of the Hampstead Ladies, though I lived there; they took things for granted that I couldn't take at all. They seemed to sail through life like conquering galleons; impervious and armoured. For them and Helen, people still knew, or didn't know, "their place", still pulled, or didn't pull, "their weight", still vere, or weren't "the right sort". Banded together, braying together, they made me feel inadequate and ill at ease. When I was alone with Helen she felt ill at ease. Perhaps that was why she wouldn't see me.

But seeing her now, there was no tension in the air, no unease. She patronized me from heights of her serenity, almost as though she were giving me an audience. "How nice of you to come!" she said. There was no shared past in her voice or in her manner; it might have been the first time she'd ever set eyes on me. Wanting to express sympathy, condolence, my own grief, I found it impossible. She was saying the things I'd read in newspaper interviews, she was saying the things I'd seen her say on television. Once more, I found myself trying to resist what I felt, that she was enjoying herself. Only once did her voice sharpen, when her *au pair*, a Spanish girl, timidly brought in the tea. "Put it there", she said, "no, there!" as the girl set the tray down on the wrong table. Otherwise, she was calm and controlled.

"Work's been such a consolation", she said, and I remem-

bered her saying it on television, the week before, remembered even the smile with which She'd said it. "I think that's the best therapy of all, don't you? To help other people, when you need help yourself."

"But the boys..." I said. "Oh, they've been wonderful. Such a support to me! Jason's really become the man of the house. He bosses me about; it's sweet!"

Jason appeared: he had just come back from school. He was a tall boy with his mother's build but his father's delicate mouth and wistful eyes. There was a pall of melancholy about him that made me want to take him in my arms and hug him. He was only fourteen. I wanted to tell him how sorry I was; I sensed the great effort that he made to conquer grief, but with Helen there, all was cheerfulness and grit.

"Darling, do help Carmen with the dinner, or we'll be here till midnight. You know how hopeless she is with potatoes." And suddenly, subversively, I had a picture of her chucking unwashed mushrooms into the stew.

"All right," the boy said, and went out of the room.

"And do walk properly, dear! Your shoulders!"

When he'd gone, she asked me, "Isn't he wonderful?"

"You've all been wonderful," I said.

It was the vague word, now, among the Hampstead Ladies. "Wasn't Helen wonderful?" On television, in the papers. "Wasn't she wonderful?" And not a trace of nerves!

I would have been much happier if there had been. I had to remind myself of what I

knew about mourning, its dodges and its displacements.

Could it be a defence, a time out of war, a way to kill the pain? I felt guilty about my hostile feelings for her, disgusted by my own disgust which lurked there, ready to be brought to life by Helen in the newspapers, Helen on television, Helen, now, at dinner parties.

There was one in Fognal, given by a Hampstead Lady whose husband was an architect. An unattached man had been provided, a divorced publisher, a sad, quiet, grey haired figure who smiled occasionally at Helen with a pleading diffidence, and to whom she hardly spoke. We sat by candlelight at an alcove table and ate *blancmanger de veau*, while Helen quipped it.

"She doesn't like him, I can tell", the hostess said to me, when I helped her carry in the coffee. "I mean, really like him: you know."

"Yes, I know," my hostess said, "and so hard to find another Peter."

If she wanted another Peter, I wasn't sure. There were more dinner parties, more unattached men, snubbed and ignored. Sometimes I was there, sometimes I just heard.

"He's just not good enough for her... He's just not Peter."

Peter's portrait hung in the hall, his photographs stood in her living room. Was it an illusion, or were there more of them than there had ever been when he was alive? As the weeks became months, as the months rolled by, as Helen smiled, dined, travelled and played squash, I saw that she was happy. Peter had gone; but she could never lose him, now.

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Thursday April	Luncheon recital in the Crypt. MAGGIE COLLIE harpsichord. Gower and Gower, piano and dulcimer.

Thursday 9 April 7:30 p.m.	THE NASH ENSEMBLE, Franco-British Chamber Music Society, RIEGEL GAIN, Richard O'Brien, Lillian L. Riegal, and others. <i>Concerts of the World. Poetique: Le Bal Masque. Night of the Musicologists.</i> Chamber Ensemble, transposed. Amelia Fier
Friday 11 April 7:30 p.m.	THE RENAISSANCE CHORUS, Raymond Celerant, cond. and Rob Faber, harp. Motets by G. Carli. <i>Peasant's Song.</i> R. P. Marcelli. <i>Chorale.</i> The Renaissance
Sunday 12 April 7:30 p.m.	LONDON CHAMBER SOLOISTS, Fiona Wenderman, vocalists. Barbara Jefford, reader. <i>Concerts of the World. Poetique: Le Bal Masque. Night of the Musicologists.</i> Chamber Ensemble, transposed. In aid of Westminster Hospital Medical School. \$10.00, \$5.00, \$2.00, \$1.00
Wednesday 15 April 7 p.m.	CONTESTED CHORUS & ENGLISH BAROQUE SOLOISTS, John Hui Gardner, cond. and Warren Hui, Stephen Patrice Kwiat, Timothy. <i>Concerts of the World. Poetique: Le Bal Masque. Night of the Musicologists.</i> Chamber Ensemble, transposed. In aid of Westminster Hospital Medical School. \$10.00, \$5.00, \$2.00, \$1.00

ST. JOHN'S Smith St. TONIGHT

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THE NASH ENSEMBLE
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soprano baritone
conductor LIONEL FRIEND

NIGEL OSBORNE *Psychology for Chamber Ensemble*
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ST JOHN'S, Smith St. SUNDAY 12 APRIL at 7.30
In aid of Westminster Hospital Medical School

LONDON CHAMBER SOLOISTS

FIONA VANDERSPAR director-violin
BARBARA JEFFORD reader
TIVYALD: The Four Seasons
MENDELSSOHN: Op. 61 in E flat, Op. 29
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 Overture : King Lear
 Les nuits d'été
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ELISABETH SODERST
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Foreign, but only just

The department had made available for a programme which included the study of teaching methods in the Prime Minister would be launching a new programme for the provision of ware in schools.

Many schools already had a programme would be launched, the full backing and financial support from the Department of Industry. It was expected that a micro-computer would be introduced in every school by the end of the year. Also on Monday a document would be launched

Shoparound with Beryl Downing Shoparound with Beryl Downing

Shoparound

with Beryl Downing Shoparound with Beryl Downing Shoparound

Paint your own egg for Easter

The point about Easter presents is not price but originality, and if you are trying to keep the cost of giving down, teaching your grandmother to suck eggs could be a profitable pastime as hand-painted real eggs are popular but expensive — the better ones are around £5 each.

If you would like to see the professionals in action, Barbara Tate will be painting eggs at Liberty on April 6, 7 and 8 (her colourful eggs are £4.95 each) and Maria Jenkala will be demonstrating the traditional Arabian techniques of waxing and dyeing eggs at Barkers, Kensington High Street, between 12 and 4 pm today and in April 13 and 18.

Also at Barkers on April 10, 11, 15 and 16 between 10 am and 4 pm a member of the Egg Crafters Guild will show the techniques of making Fabergé-style eggs, decorated with crystal beads, braids and stones. Some will be for sale, from £5 for small eggs to £75 for an ostrich egg.

Easter is never likely to rival Christmas in the present-giving stakes, but small gifts with a chicken and egg theme are becoming more popular each year to put by the family breakfast plates on Easter Sunday, or to take to your holiday host and hostess.

Pot luck snooker for the cueless

played snooker with world champion Ray Reardon last week at the launch of a new dice game he is endorsing called Pot Luck. Well, perhaps I should not let my enthusiasm entirely eclipse truth — he showed me how to position my hand and actually let me use his cue and with such an instructor I assume the only reason the ball did not pop into the pocket was simply that my arms are too short.

You need no skill or guiding hand to play Pot Luck Snooker. The game consists of a "green baize" tray, a miniature wooden replica of a pool table and a selection of potted dice — red ones to "pot" the 15 reds, multi-coloured ones with a different coloured spot on each side to represent the other balls.

If you have ever watched snooker on television you will find the rules easy enough to understand, notching up your score as the dice turn up the colour you call. Your "break" ends if the colour shown is not the one you guessed.

It is one of those irritatingly compulsive games of chance for two or four players that could occupy many a wet half hour at a party and it is small enough to be handy for maintaining the unquenchable equilibrium at airports and other delay-ridden terminals. Useful anti-boredom device for £9.99 from The Games Centre, 1 Hanway Street, London W1. Just Games, 63 Brewer Street, London W1.



Conversation piece at a hen party.

You can make your own groups of red, white or black hens, 2in high, at 55p each from Liberty, Regent Street, London W1.



Above: Decorate for Easter in Scandinavian style by hanging wooden novelties from a budding branch. Colourful wooden eggs in packs of 12, £1.75, rabbits £1 a pair, chicken in egg 75p. Paper basket with flower border, £1.65. All from The Danish House, 16 Sloane Street, London SW1.

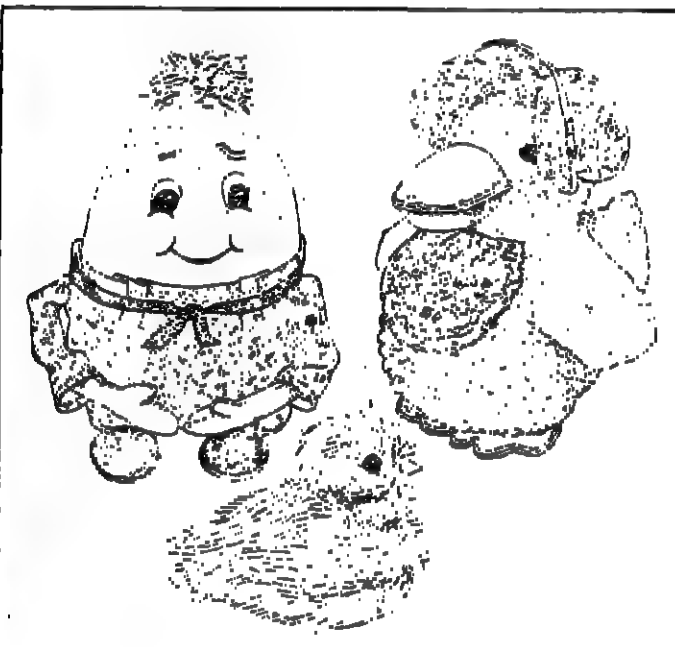
Add 25p p&p up to £2, 50p from £2-£5. Over £5 post free. Above centre: Yellow or white egg "flowers" on long stems, £3.65 each from Heals, Tottenham Court Road, London W1. Above right: Liberty print Humpty Dumpty by Jackie Anderson, £13.95 from Liberty, Regent Street; endearing duck in flame resistant fleecy fur fabric, £4 including p&p by Angela Hartford, Pennine Craft, Bantel Works, Rye Road, Hoddesdon, Herts, 01-441 0220; amber fur fabric chicken, £2.34 plus 25p p&p from The Tree House, 237 Kensington High Street, London W8.



Egg on toast jigsaw comes in a giant plastic egg, 95p.

A set of six eggs, each containing a different jigsaw, packed in a cardboard egg box is £5.50, plus £1 p&p, from Cucina, 8 England's Lane, London NW3, or 4a Ladbroke Grove, London W11.

Jolly clown eggs with feet from a range of handpainted character eggs, £5.50 each from Heals.



Watch the cartoonist at work

If you are in London on Good Friday and Easter Monday you may be glad to know that the Neal Street Gallery, 56 Neal Street, London WC2, is staying open because their current exhibition is particularly attractive to children. It is all about animation and cartoons.

At one end of the gallery is a room set of an animation studio showing the various stages from the original brief, through the backgrounds, illustrations and preparation of cels (drawings on celluloid). During the run of the exhibition, until April 25, animators will be demonstrating their skills there. They will not be there all day, but you could telephone 01-379 7232 to make sure you don't miss them.

Some of the original drawings are for sale, from around £30 framed to £150, and there are limited editions of Walt Disney characters at £145-£250.

The exhibition is by no means just for children. A television in one corner showing cartoons and commercials will keep them happy while you study the graphics. It is fascinating to see how decorative they are in still form and how they translate to the moving screen.

John Painter, joint owner of the gallery, believes that some of the best and most imaginative work today is being done by commercial artists. "Gone are the days when artists had to starve in a garret. Today their commercial work is the foundation for the experimental films they really want to do."

The gallery is already, after only 18 months, one of the leading showplaces for illustration, photography and graphic art and I found the exhibition exciting, stimulating and entertaining. What more do you want from an Easter outing?

More holiday ideas for your diary: the Society of West End Theatre has combined with Childminders to enable young married couples to obtain reduced rates for babysitters.

Childminders normally charge a £10 temporary registration fee or a temporary booking fee of £2.50, in addition to the babysitting charges. Customers booking tickets at the Half Price Ticket Booth in Leicester Square can use both services at reduced rates, £2.50 off the registration fee or a waiving of the temporary fee.

For those within reach of Longleat House, Wiltshire, an interesting exhibition opens on Good Friday. For the first time, the Longleat Embroideries, stored for centuries in the attics, will be on show. They include the English Bed Set made around 1733 for Lady Louisa Carteret, who is now said to haunt the house in search of her murdered lover.

Because of the damage that can be caused by light, the embroideries will only be on show until September 30, but a collection of 17th century Dutch masters, previously crammed in an unused corridor, will be on permanent view from Easter.

piece of soft mantle (the edible bit of the creature) rather than a hard nucleus, being placed in a freshwater mussel. Many of these are farmed on Lake Biwa in Japan, but freshwater pearls can be found in mussels all over the world. Peter Knowles-Brown even has some freshwater pearls found by his grandfather in Hampshire ponds.

The exhibition, at H. Knowles-Brown Ltd, 27 Hampstead High Street, London NW3, will continue until May 30 (closed on Mondays).

Who can resist a bargain?

London caught up with the provinces yesterday when its first Cookmate reject kitchen shop opened at 119 King Street, Hammersmith. There are already 32 such bargain bazaars in the country, specializing in clearance lines of cutlery, cookware, pine furniture and basketware.

They are all franchises, a chain begun by Brian Howlett when he bought the stock of Robert Carrier's two London cookshops when they closed in 1975. He set up his first reject shop in Hertfordshire, opened a second eight weeks later and within five years his turnover had reached £2 million a year.

After the first five successful Cookmates, a friend asked to be allowed to open under licence and there has been a steady demand for franchises ever since. The plan is to open two more a month from now until the end of 1985, for while 95 per cent of small retail businesses fail within their first five years of trading, only five per cent of franchises go the same way.

All the shops have the same fittings and display to give them an identity and licensees are given help with everything up to the shop opening — from labels and carriers to window dressing. Goods are centrally bought by

Cookmate's head office and there are special promotions each month — basketware is Hammersmith's opening offer, including door mats at 99p, Alibab baskets at £9.95, a 5ft round rush mat £5.25 and the inevitable Peacock chair, £39.95.

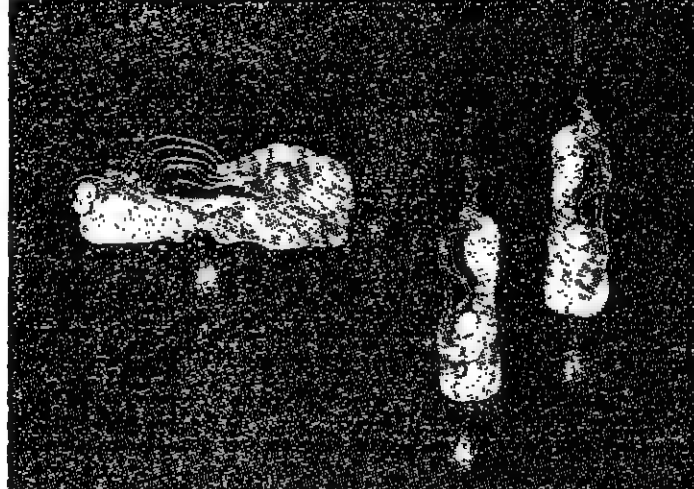
Among other bargains are director's chairs in natural or orange canvas at £29.95, kits of pine shelves at £6.15, pine bread bins, £10.65, candles in the shape of numbers, 18p each, cane plant trainers, 75p. For the address of your nearest Cookmate branch, write to Cookmate Ltd, 48 Friars Square, Aylesbury, Bucks, who will also give details of mail order.

Pearls that match every mood

An exhibition opening in Hampstead next Tuesday is devoted to that most female of jewels, the pearl. The organizers, Peter and Andrew Knowles-Brown, searched for jewellers who are passionate about pearls and found nine — all women, which, they say, "reflects no prejudice by anyone, but says something of the way in which pearls have fascinated females throughout the ages."

The thing that fascinates me about the collection and its designers is the versatility of the medium. No discreet companions for twinsets, these, but distinctive demonstrations of the ability of the pearl to adapt to a variety of moods from traditional to abstract.

Audrey Dryden-Brownlee, for instance, produces a layered effect in her pearl jewelry almost like applique with a frosted pearl finish; Susan Clarke conjures an image of the South Seas by blending pearls with the turquoise and deep blues of that



Brooch in 18ct gold with baroque pearl drop and cultured pearl, £377. Earrings with pearl drops, £202. Both by Audrey Dryden-Brownlee at H. Knowles-Brown, 27 Hampstead High Street, London NW3, from Tuesday.

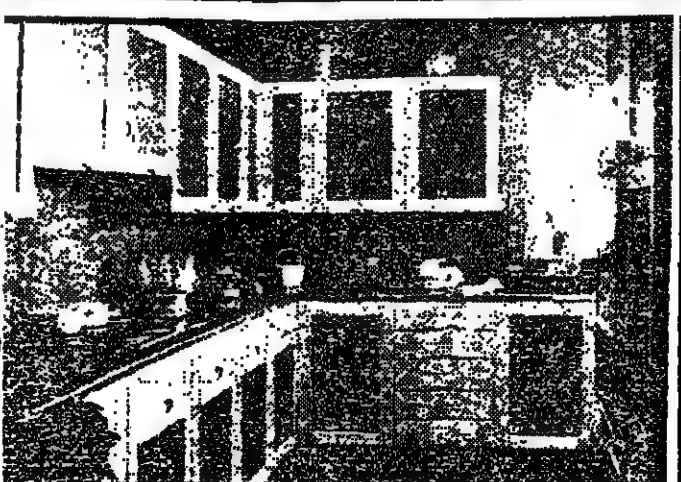
most modern material, niobium. The most abstract work is by Abigail Fleissig and the most traditional by Cynthia Jenkins, whose necklace in fine gold set with pink sapphires, diamonds and pearls is the most expensive in the show at £3,500.

There are plenty of covetable pieces at lower prices, too. Earrings are from £20 to £50, or you could have a silver necklace set with coral and freshwater

pearls at £36 or one set with agate and black pearls at £87; both by Marilyn Nicholson.

Lustre and a good colour are the qualities to look for in pearls, whether natural, when the oyster covers a grain of sand with layers of nacre, or cultured, when a pearl bead is inserted to form the nucleus round which the pearl forms.

The latest development is non-nucleated pearls, the result of a



The sort of price you just cannot knock

al pine knock-together kitchen units at knock-down prices introduced this week by Kwiklok. They are excellent value and I know they are easy to assemble because they work the same Kwiklok principle the bedroom cupboards I bought last year. You need tools — they clip together with a smart bash of the fist, or, of the hand, as the publicity material more elegantly but less surely puts it. All the units have pine rounds with laminated door panels in white, olive or brick. Drawer units are all pine and all the handles are recessed,

so there are no ugly knobs, which are the undoing of most cheap furniture. Work surfaces come in fake onyx or fake tile, but they are very believable — and ideal, I would suggest, for young home-builders with lots of demands on limited resources.

There are 22 units from a small wall cupboard at £26.13 to base cupboard with drawer, £50.99, oven housing £77.19, five-drawer base unit £79.49. Worktops range from £7.49 to £21.99 according to size. The range is called Richmond by Newage and can be ordered from major Woolworths.

Travelling light

The first range of luggage by Yuki is on show at the Design Centre this week and it is everything you might expect from a designer of such sensuously flattering clothes. It is made of leather as soft and light as a pair of gloves and if fashion decreed that we all wore suitcases, I am sure you would feel most comfortable zipped into a Yuki holdall.

Weight, or rather the lack of it, was one of his main concerns in designing the range of 17 models for Papworth. "Luggage design is not just a question of shape and looks," says Yuki. "It is practicality. People travel light these days and they don't want to wait about at airports — they want something they can carry with them. So I have tried to make something beautiful that will hold a lot and still be compact."

The result is a range of cases, flight bags and briefcases with shoulder straps as well as handles; many have "office compartments" for papers and documents in the centre, which open like a book, with the clothes compartments on either side. There are two large suitcases, too, if you really need something roomier than hand luggage.

The phenomenon described by Papworth as "the rise of the woman executive" has produced

a particularly handsome shape which is smart enough to be used as a shoulder-cum-document bag in town, and spacious enough to accommodate some lunchtime shopping. Men will like it, too, as it is big enough to take overnight things and a clean shirt.

Great attention has been paid to detail. The leather was specially developed to be as light as possible and is dyed right through so that scratches and scuffs will be less noticeable and rain spots will not cause permanent marks. The linings are dyed to match and are beautifully finished. The fittings are solid brass.

The colour is called red sienna — a soft, brick shade which goes with most clothes and looks extremely stylish and expensive. Which it should be, because it is. A round shoulder bag, 10½in in diameter, for instance, is about £53, a suitcase for two suits, with a coat-hanger and two interior zipper shirt pockets is £185.15, a concertina file case with one deep and one shallow compartment with a six-division file section, £223.

Some items from the range are now on show at The Design Centre, 28 Haymarket, London W1. These are for display only. Other models will be available by the end of the month at Asprey, Harrods and Austin Reed (Regent Street). Don't be surprised if prices vary. If you would like provincial stockists, write to Papworth, Papworth Everard, Cambridge CB3 8RG or telephone 0480 830345.



Soft, lightweight luggage in fine leather by Yuki for Papworth. Flight bag/holdall, £198, concertina file case, £223, round shoulder bag £53.16, from the range available at the end of April from Asprey, Harrods and Austin Reed, Regent Street.

Eggs? Try a basket

As sure as eggs is eggs and teeth is deatres there are some who will have nothing but chocolate for Easter. If you are among them, you may at least care to consider something a little different from the traditional hollow shell — a basket of home-made confections, for instance.

Angela Jay and Yvonne Field began their business four years ago with the vague feeling they "wanted to do something home-made". Jams and cakes were the first thought, but the high street competition would have swamped them, so they began looking at recipes for sweets.

They found one for marzipan, adapted it — and had the enterprise (or nerve) to walk into Fortnum and Mason with their first efforts. They came out with an order and, because they happened to have parked their

car by the Hotel Bristol, popped in there, too. Another success — an order for 30 baskets of sweetmeats which "threw us into a panic as we had never made more than two pounds of marzipan before."

Those experimental days are long past, as are their attempts to boil chocolate over pans of water, but the style and quality which won their first orders is still there. They don't like chocolate to be too sweet, so they have invented their own recipes. Their fillings are delicious, original and won high praise in this office.

For those outside London, the gifts that can be most successfully mailed are the boxes, £4.50 per pound plus £1.20 p&p, or baskets, decorated specially for Easter if you wish, £4.10 ½lb plus £1 p&p. For details of the range (they do named Easter eggs containing their own chocolate drops, too) and delivery charges, contact Village Fayre, 389 Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, Middlesex. 01-421-0363.

The lightest dark Blue in the race

Sportsview

Susan Brown, a 22-year-old Devonian, is likely to attract more attention today across the world than Lady Diana Spencer or Mrs Thatcher, unless Mrs Linda Sheedy, a 500-1 outsider, rides Deiopea to victory in the Grand National.

At 1 pm Susan Brown will win her rowing Blue as Oxford coxswain, the first woman to compete in the Boat Race in its 152-year history. Millions will focus on how Miss Brown navigates what can be a treacherous course. It is fitting, too, that today's BBC Boat Race commentary team will be joined by Penny Chuter, coach of the British Men's Heavyweight Eight.

It could be said that Mrs Shirley Williams played a hand in this affair: Susan Brown's rival for the Oxford cox's seat, Adrian Rossiter, resigned as a Boat Race candidate to help to steer a political party and work with the Social Democrats—Shirley Williams impressed him.

But even then Susan Brown was favourite for selection. This is not an Oxford gimmick—she was selected on merit from more than 30 men candidates for the cox's seat. Although weighing in at 6 stone 8lb, she is 20lb lighter than the Cambridge cox, Chris Wigglesworth.

It is steering ability that counts over the four-and-a-quarter mile voyage from Putney to Mortlake.

Ray Penney, one of the most experienced coxswains, gives some insight to the daunting task facing Miss Brown today. "The public image of a cox is a sack of potatoes sitting at the back of the boat shouting 'in, out, in, out'. Steering Oxford today will be like driving a Formula One car. It is mentally demanding and any adjustment to steering must be anticipated and made with fine precision or the shell will skid beneath her."

Overriding excessively by use of the rudder acts as a brake on a racing shell. Coxswains in the Boat Race have far from an easy ride and more than earn their Blue.

Wigglesworth and Miss Brown today will be negotiating a Queen's highway with no road markings to designate the right of way. Off the start they may be duelling for the centre of the tide or, if conditions are bad on any part of the course, abandoning it to seek shelter and judge the best route to Mortlake.

Miss Brown is fortunate in that she has a very experienced crew to handle, with six winning



Susan Brown: membership of Leander next?

Blues on board, including last year's president, Boris Rankov, and this year's Olympic silver medal winner, Chris Mahoney. The Oxford crew are odds-on favourites; they have shown no resentment to the blaze of publicity surrounding their coxswain, which could have been a sensitive issue.

"I'm embarrassed by it," she told me, recognising that her charges on the water have been left in a dark blue shadow. Coxing Oxford has left her no time for boy friends. But you sense by the sparkle in her eyes she has found job satisfaction in her role. Her rise to fame has been rapid. She only

took up coxing just over two years ago when she arrived at Wadham College to read biochemistry. Last year she coxed the British women's coxed fours in the Moscow Olympic regatta and through the national women's squad she gained her Tideway experience.

By competing in the Oxford regatta last December, she would, but for her sex, automatically become a candidate for election to the famous Leander Club. Now a special general meeting of Leander Club members has been called on April 25 to consider the admission of women as members. Miss Brown, however, will lose eight votes

because on that very day she will be steering the Oxford crew in a race against Cambridge 14,000 miles away in Tokyo.

The role of women in sport today cannot be ignored. Rowing is assisted by a recruiting campaign sponsored by the British Home Stores, who employ 27,000 women. Over 2,600 oarswomen and scullers compete in the sport in England and Wales, compared with 980 in 1975. Women's rowing events were only introduced to the Olympic programme in 1976 and this year there will be two experimental women's events at Henley Royal Regatta.

Susan Brown is not a feminist. She is a modest and reserved young woman on the bank, but once in a racing shell she is an Iron Lady. She will have more than housewives cheering her on today as another male bastion falls.

Another woman figuring today in what is primarily a male-orientated sport is Jenny Pittman, the trainer of Lord Gulliver in the Grand National (her other horse, Artistic Prince, went lame and is a doubtful starter).

Jim Railton

Rather odd, not to say a bit rum

New words and new meanings: a series by Philip Howard

Let us turn our attention this week, brothers and sisters, not to a new word or meaning, but to a deficiency in the language. English has by far the largest vocabulary of any tongue that has babbed since the boys started to build a tower to reach upon heaven on a plain in the land of Shinar.

But there are still blanks in it. There is no word for Schadenfreude. We say that; it is because the English are such decent, agreeable people. Germans say there is a hole in the language. There is no way that you can say *mutatis mutandis* in English without intolerable periphrasis.

C. H. Rolph, the learned and witty wordsmith on pen and most other matters, is looking for an adjective to fill another gap. We fill it at present with an illogical use of words such as extraordinary, strange, odd, and rum.

Here are some examples. "Aren't people extraordinary?" A person can be extraordinary; but it is quite impossible for people to be extraordinary. "Isn't it odd how everyone seems to think...?" If everybody does it, it cannot be odd, habes. "Strange that no one ever replies to such appeals." If no one does, it must be familiar, not strange. "Extraordinary name, Smith, really. I mean you find it coupled with absolutely anything." It existed; it odd that everybody says this kind of thing? I certainly do. And so does dear C. H. Rolph.

There is a similar rum illogicality in the universal journalistic misuse of mean/means/ meant/ will mean. For example, from the romantic topic of the hour: "Lord Spencer's friendship with the Royal Family meant that the Queen is god-mother to..." Well, I see what he means, but, really, it didn't mean anything of the sort.

George Milnes, that most native of aliens, who writes better English than most of us, points out another black hole in the language. He declares that there is one expression he has particularly missed for 43 years, ever since he tried to learn our language. It existed; it would be "how manich?"—the equivalent of *Wie veltte* in German; or *hampadik* in Hungarian.

When one gets into a lift, the person nearest the buttons may ask, "Which floor?", which is a reasonable substitute to help one over the deficiency. But if you want to know how manich child a chap is in his family, you have to ask: "Any brothers or sisters?" Then, when he replies that he has seven brothers and eight sisters, you have to carry on with your prolix interrogation: "Are you the eldest among the boys?" We badly need how manich, and it is odd that our second and flexible language has not produced such a useful interrogative.

There are other gaps in the language, the most obvious one being the lack of a sexually neutral pronoun instead of his or hers. It also seems odd that a language that evolved, like all languages in a pastoral and agricultural society, should have no singular for the word cattle. We have to say heifer/cow or ox/bullock bull, which is cumbersome and lumbering.

Is it really such a Benn bombshell?

Fred Emery

Granted that Mr Wedgwood Benn fished his comrades inside the Tribune Group of left-wing Labour MPs. Painfully for them, his 3.30 am announcement of his candidature for deputy leader preempted their 4 am effort, which had been to elect him.

Granted also that with his retort: "It's a free country", Mr Benn is defying the judgment of his party leader. The question remains: Why has the Labour leadership become so hysterical about his decision to contest their first election?

By seeking to arouse the alarm of party division, while deploring it, have they some deep-lying plot to discredit Mr Benn? Or is he a bigger bogey to them than to the other parties? Are they scared that he might win the deputy leadership and lose the party the next election—or lose and reinforce Healey, and still help lose the election?

The evidence points both to deliberation and to incipient panic. Mr Foot and Mr Healey have long had notice of Mr Benn's determination to stand. And they knew that Mr Foot had failed to dissuade him. They might have treated casually the actual announcement that he was going for the softest spot, the deputy leadership.

Or the centre-right's latter-day Labour fight-back group might have had the confidence of its bold predictions, to welcome the opportunity to beat off Mr Benn and put paid to his stark policy challenges for a while (well, another year, anyway).

But it is the left that is in control now because of their panic. They have their agony that if Mr Benn is elected then all the hard-fought-for new policies go down with him.

Most interestingly it is on the Labour left that reaction has been most melodramatic. And let no one say it is "largely media inspired", as Mr Eric Heffer now writes of Labour's "difficult period" in the latest *Labour Weekly*. Mr Benn's various opponents stamped in trying to trample him. Mr Foot took the unprecedented step of

publicly calling on his Shadow Cabinet colleague to desert on the grounds that neither party nor country could take it. The same leader of the Opposition who relied on party pressures to overcome his own reluctance to enter last November's leadership election, summons up public pressure to keep Mr Benn out, for this year at least. Mr Healey, in Germany, is kept aware of the moves but refrains from comment—an ominous reminder to some of his supporters of the uncombative way he fought and lost to Mr Foot. Perhaps he is playing it cool, leaving it to the left to cut up rough.

Mr Benn's campaign is bound to be divisive; that is the way of politics. But his candidature is no more than the logical and relentless next step in his sustained campaign to democratise, or revolutionise, the party's structure and policies; to ensure, as he would put it, that the next Labour government does what the party conference says it must do. He has now had the fortuitousness to state starkly all the policy choices that Mr Foot has been trying to fudge.

Once Mr Benn had told Mr Foot that he intended fighting an election which the party conference had just agreed to it is odd politics to try to stop him standing, whether by emotional appeal or by ridicule. Prevention can only fan the fire; the left's well-developed sense of persecution.

Mr Benn will not be invulnerable during his campaign. When he professes that it's all done for policy and party unity and not for ambition he can be reminded of what he said last November when he disclaimed the election by MPs on the grounds that the process was "illegitimate"; he would be a candidate, he said, once the new process was installed by party conference. Now he chooses not to take on the leader but the most winnable post.

He has in fact been itching to have a go at Mr Healey. In January Mr Benn left colleagues on the party's national executive committee with the clear



Mr Benn, not invulnerable

impression that he wanted them to hold the special election conference as early as next month. But from the Wembley conference rostrum Mr Clive Jenkins openly warned the NEC that union leaders did not want further contest of the party leadership immediately.

Mr Benn never agreed. In the meantime the Social Democrats have defected and the Labour fight-back against the Bennite reforms has begun. Mr Benn believes there may be still more MPs in the party of whom Labour would be well rid. It must be assumed that he does not trust the party leadership to steer Labour on to the fundamental left-wing course which he proclaims the sure-fire election winner.

He and his friends in the activist crusade of the so-called rank and file mobilising committee want to "consolidate" the newly adopted left-wing policies, as they put it, and for this there can be no standstill, only pressing forward.

Although it may seem tedious to outsiders, many on the left will not easily

forgive the early hours caper in the Commons by which Mr Benn outwitted his pursuers. It transpires that most of his 16 sponsors had signed up by last Monday, but word of his impending announcement did not get out to the rest of the Tribunes until he had seen Mr Foot on Wednesday evening. At this point, well after midnight, remarking that Mr Benn had only joined the group on February 3, some of the younger Tribunes thought there ought to be a Tribune discussion "before any member commits himself publicly".

They drafted a letter to Mr Ian Mikardo, their veteran and highly experienced chairman. But in their innocence the letter's authors solicited advice and signatures from Mr Benn's sponsors, including Mr Mikardo, and Mr Robert Hughes, not realising, until told, that they were such.

No outsider can be totally sure who, during that all-night session at the Commons, subsequently said what to whom. What is clear is that the letter writers decided to precipitate matters. They got up to 26 signatures. Mr Robin Cook went with the letter at 4 am to the Press Association office in the Commons only to find that Mr Benn had preceded him. Mr Cook went down to Mr Mikardo with his letter only to be told, correctly, as Mr Mikardo puts it in his letter of reply: "One of our members has already committed himself publicly and indeed did so before I received your letter."

In subsequent conversations around dawn Mr Hughes was misinterpreted as saying he was unhappy and believed, by fellow MPs, to be reconsidering his sponsorship of Mr Benn. Instead, it seems, Mr Hughes told them that with hindsight he could see that they had a case for being unhappy. But he will not defect from Mr Benn.

Mr Benn may say that elections heal and resolve choices. But of one thing his opponents can be certain: he never gives up, even when defeated. They can thank him at least that he has given them six clear months to prepare.

Malta: the search for a new heroic role

Letter from Valletta

The strocchio makes people edgy, bringing an irritating haziness to the view across the Grand Harbour, and if anything should for the moment be banned from the island it ought to be this tedious gesticulation from Africa rather than *The Times* which has been unobtainable by order of the government since March 9.

The sense of irritation is very real and does not depend on the weather. I cannot remember any time in Malta's recent history when there was so much tension in personal relations, so many allegations against political opponents, so much contentiousness in general. The opening theme of the latest pastoral from the Roman Catholic bishops was about the disturbing growth of political fanaticism.

Mr Dom Mintoff's erratic ways of running a government are partly to blame. He has held power now for nearly a decade and the strain on the nerves was bound to tell. As this is a letter and not a despatch I can properly admit to a degree of admiration for the Prime Minister despite the obvious faults which his close friends make no attempt to conceal.

Malta is weighed down—visually even—by its heroic past. All those bastions and watch-towers reminding the young *Dissidi* of the medieval fortifications of Jerusalem and he very properly connected the Crusader presence in Jerusalem with that of the Knights in Malta. The Knights imposed on the island a huge role in fighting Islam and from their arrival in the sixteenth century the place was unfairly destined to massive importance on the Mediterranean stage, invariably as a base. But how does one emerge from a reality attached by history?

At his best, Mr Mintoff has tried to re-chart Malta's role. It has been his break with the British presence, a virtual rejection of western diplomatic intimacy despite the fact that both the British High Commissioner and the American Chargé d'Affaires gamely stood through the "freedom day" ceremony on Tuesday called to mark the end of the British base. His foreign policy has also meant a period of close friendship with Libya, which has now broken down in bitter quarrelling. On the main irritants, his opponents say, is that the Maltese for the first time in centuries simply no longer know where they stand.

A grey-haired man robustly filling out an elderly grown suit wave his hand towards the Grand Harbour and said: "you should have seen it full of the British fleet between the wars." I said: "my father did." He asked "what ship was he in?" I replied: "Barham." As quick as a Mississippi card-sharper producing an ace he took out an old photograph from a pack in his pocket and pointed to the huge battleship on the left. "That's Barham in the Grand Harbour," he said, and gave me the photograph so that I could see how the ship with perhaps my father somewhere on it looked as it lay off Valletta.

He pointed to a group of dishevelled Arabs sitting on the ground near us. "Egyptians," he said with contempt. "They come here to get visas to go

and work in Libya, and die the place while they are waiting." This may be an extreme case but it shows the difficulties some people feel in moving away from a heroic role.

There are occasional shades reported of essential goodness which are ascribed to mistakes in the government's bulk-billing programmes. This irritates people; so does the Prime Minister's habit of scarcely lifting one quarrel end before raising a new issue.

Changes in the legal code brought fears that the authorities would feel free to act without restraint by the law. Church schools are a centre of controversy and plans for a central family planning council are likely to grow into another source of friction. Two NHS hospitals no longer function and are missed.



Mr Mintoff... after 10 years of reasonable coexistence, on bad terms again with the church and accused of eroding democracy

At least a part of this contentiousness could be ascribed to an attempt by Mr Mintoff, tactfully but effectively, in heavy-handed way, to establish where authority lies within island which for centuries that authority imposed its outside. He places it firmly the executive. And so, after years of reasonable coexistence he is once again on bad terms with the Church, and accused by the opposition of eroding democracy.

He is now worrying the profession, too, with the commission set up to examine the whole system of justice. I hear complaints against the law. And yet his own Attorney General, Mr Edgar Mizzi, who term in office has just come an end, will not only go dealing with international disputes—above all, the dispute over the continental shelf in Libya—but is also returning to his legal practice and will clear enthusiasm. Presumably he is not deterred by what did while in office.

Peter Nichol

Uncaring young America

New York

An attempted assassination is different in scale from an actual assassination, both in its consequences and in its impact on the emotions. Yet even taking that into account, many Americans, especially those in contact with young people, have detected a reaction here this week that contrasts significantly with that which followed the killings of the 1960s.

On the day following the attempt, newspapers all over the country published editorials saying wearily and sadly: "Here we go again." They foresaw another period of agonized self-questioning about the violence in American society and where it would lead the nation.

Yet to a surprising extent that has not occurred. Two reasons have already been much discussed. One is the President's own surprising cheerfulness and the other is that over the years people have become desensitized to such acts of violence. Television presumably has much to do with that. *The New York Post* calculated yesterday that in the week before the shooting, 16 fictional murders were committed on the three main television networks.

A third reason is that President Reagan is not, as President Kennedy was, a leader with whom the young identify. It was young Americans (by which I mean middle-aged Americans) who felt most desolate about the death of Kennedy and whose articulate anguish, reported worldwide, became the nation's reaction as recorded for posterity.

There is not much reason for young people to feel an emotional attachment to Mr Reagan. It is not simply that he is 70, but the policies with which he is associated—lower taxes for the rich, cuts in social services, support for tyrannical right-wing regimes—are the antithesis of youthful idealism.

Thus it was not really surprising that schoolchildren in Tulsa, Oklahoma, are reported to have cheered when they first heard the news of the shooting on Monday. In Cleveland, Ohio—a struggling industrial city, not part of Mr Reagan's natural constituency—people telephoned television stations angrily on Monday afternoon, complaining that their favourite programme, *The Tonight Show*, had been cancelled for live coverage of the aftermath of the attack.

In Philadelphia, Dominic Manno, columnist for the University of Pennsylvania's student newspaper, wrote that his first reaction to the news was "too bad he missed". Then when he heard that the President had been hit, he thought: "I hope he dies". He was later questioned by two Secret Service Agents.

It scarcely needs stressing that this is the view of an unrepresentative minority. Some young people believe it is smart to be callous. America is essentially a decent country whose citizens deplore attempts to enforce political change by assassination.

Yet for every Dominic Manno there are hundreds of thousands of youngsters who care little enough for Mr Reagan and for the political system which brought him to office to remain detached and indifferent about his fate.

We may have been seeing this week a pointer to a new and more militant mood on college campuses and among young people in the cities.

Michael Leapman

Face to face in Fermanagh



Fermanagh's choice: Unionist Harold West or Maze prisoner Robert Sands.

countrywide eight miles from Belfast. Mr West is operating from his splendid farmhouse outside Enniskillen, the only proper town in the rural lake-land county of Fermanagh.

On paper Mr Sands, serving 14 years for possession of firearms, should win the election. There is, a nationalist majority over the Unionists of about 6,000—but many Roman Catholics will abstain rather than support an IRA man; the outcome is therefore not entirely predictable.

Robert Sands is aged 27. Harold West is 64. Mr Sands is a smuggling election addresses from a hospital bed in the Maze Prison which sprawls across several acres in ugly contrast to the surrounding

fast without a powerful reason and nobody can be sure whether success in the election would be reason enough. Probably, it would not.

Provisional Sinn Féin says Mr Sands will immediately resign if he wins, thus precipitating another by-election in which neither he nor any Sinn Féin candidate would participate. To be the sole representative of the nationalist side is already a victory in itself, whatever the outcome of the poll; to win would be a propaganda sensation.

Mr Sands became the only anti-Unionist runner because of the exceptional gift of guile

and taste for intrigue repeated by demonstrated by Provisional Sinn Féin, whose propaganda machine leaves its rivals standing.

The moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party was deftly outmanoeuvred and is now in danger of tearing itself apart by internal squabbling. The decision to withdraw its candidate in order to concentrate resources on the local elections in May in the belief that one or more candidates other than Mr Sands would fight the nationalist corner, may prove to be one of the decisive mistakes of a usually talented leadership.

What they have done is leave the nationally-minded Roman Catholics of Fermanagh and South Tyrone with a choice of voting for a man violence, or not voting at all, and many of them are as bewildered.

There is a historical precedent for this remarkable election Philip Clarke a 35-year-old civil servant from Dublin, was serving ten years for treason after an IRA raid on Omagh military barracks. Tyrone, captured the constituency for Sinn Féin in 1979 by 261 votes. He was the only nationalist candidate and I sole rival was a model of British ascendancy in Ireland Lt Col R. C. Grosvenor.

The seat was granted Colonel Grosvenor by a High Court judge presiding over a petition court in Enniskillen because of a now defunct rule under the Forfeitures Act 1870 which stated that anyone serving more than 12 months in prison could not enter it.

In the 10 polls since the constituency was created before the 1950 election, nationalist candidates have been elected six times.

Mr Sands, in an election address smuggled from the Maze, declares: "There is but one issue at stake—the right of human dignity for Irishmen and women who are imprisoned for taking part in the period of the independence."

Mr West said in his manifesto that Ulster's links with the Crown and place within the United Kingdom must be maintained and strengthened.

And in those opposing comments from two very different Irishmen lies the essence of the country's tragedy.

Christopher Thomas



Perhaps Lord Kingsale is misled by the fact that the word "tip" is seldom used. A straightforward gravity is "a drink" or "beer money"; the necessary but less prompt payment "to ensure promptness" is "dropped" or "dropsy", i.e. "it is dropped in the palm."

Under this description working-class people do more tipping than the other social groups. However objectionable it may be, we understand that it is part of the other fellows' living. Thus, Lord Kingsale's word "unliking" is due.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT EARLTROP,
St Martin's Avenue, E6.
April 4.

§ Forward bargains are permitted on two previous days

هكذا في الأصل

سكنا من الاحل

THE TIMES
BUSINESS NEWS

Stock markets	
FT Ind 339.6 down 2.3	
FT Giles 70.06 down 0.04	
Sterling	
\$2.2055 down 2.35 cents	
Index 99.5 down 0.5	
Dollar	
Index 101.1 up 0.9	
DM 2.1220 up 1.20 pts	
Gold	
\$523.30 up \$3	
Money	
3 mth sterling 121.121	
3 mth Euro \$ 141.141	
6 mth Euro \$ 141.141	

Chrysler has
made its
last 'gas
guzzler'

Chrysler, the American car maker whose deep financial problems were rooted in its inability to follow the public's switch away from large cars, has closed its last 'gas guzzler' production line.

The company yesterday closed its 53-year-old Lynch Road assembly plant in Detroit, putting out of the full-sized car market entirely.

This summer, Chrysler will consolidate its production into four United States car plants making front-wheel-drive small cars and one Canadian plant making conventional intermediate cars.

The Chrysler New Yorker, Dodge St Regis and Plymouth Gran Fury, all big cars made at Lynch Road, never sold very well, despite a \$57m (£25m) overhaul of the plant for the new models in 1978.

Chrysler says the plant and its 122-acre site is for sale. Rumours persist that it might be reopened, possibly for a joint venture with a Japanese car maker.

Housebuilding falters

Builders started work on 11,500 homes in February, compared to 13,600 in February 1980, according to the Department of the Environment. But starts for the three months up to and including February were 18 per cent up on the previous quarter, reflecting the recent increase in house-building activity.

Bonn to cut spending

The West German Government is likely to decide next week on measures to cut Federal expenditure and stimulate investment, according to an official spokesman, but it will not fuel demand with a large spending package.

China oil target

China produced 24.9 million tons of crude oil in the first three months of the year, on course for its 1981 oil production target of 100 million tons. China's offshore oil wells are not expected to produce large quantities until after 1985.

Fund runs dry

The International Monetary Fund has exhausted the \$3,000m (£1,300m) in its trust fund set up in 1976 to help Third World countries. Future repayments will be used to finance aid.

obs cash plan

France and West Germany plan to float a joint loan on the European capital market to finance a programme to fight unemployment in the two countries.

40m loan to Turkey

The World Bank has announced a 40 (£18m) loan to Turkey to finance expansion of exports of fruit and vegetables.

ideo tape expansion

In a two-year expansion plan, the 3M company in Britain is investing £3m to quadruple the output of video tape cassettes. Gorseinon, near Swansea.

Wall Street lower

The Dow Jones industrial average closed at 1,007.11 down 30 on Wall Street yesterday. The S&P 500 index was 219.90 while the S&P 400 was 185.66.

Shipyard job cuts provoke
Tyneside walkout and
a challenge to chairman

By Donald Macintyre

Labour Reporter

Shipbuilders faced mounting opposition last night over its plan for more than 600 compulsory redundancies.

About 200 workers at Tyneside Shipbuilders' Union, led by Mr William Niven, national shipbuilding officer of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, called for Mr Robert Atkinson, the shipbuilders' chairman, to challenge the Government's monetarist policies or resign.

The walkout in the middle docks and engineering section of the Tyneside yard, mainly by members of the Boiler-makers' Society, came as 100 workers received formal redundancy notices.

Shop stewards from yards throughout the country are to meet in Newcastle on Monday to determine their formal response to the job cuts. The dismissals follow a restructuring programme under which about 2,000 employees have left the industry voluntarily.

Despite the executive however, a surplus of 628 remains throughout the yards and the corporation has made it clear that compulsory redundancy is necessary.

A notice began to reach workers yesterday shop stewards at Govan and Yarrow held meetings at the Clyde held meetings at



Mr Atkinson: Accused of ignoring unions' advice.

which they were given support for whatever stance the delegates take at Monday's meeting.

Although heated opposition is bound to be expressed at the meeting particularly from yards most affected, which include Cammell Laird on Merseyside, it remains uncertain whether the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) is ready to give full backing to industrial action.

Thursday's meeting of the CSEU executive left it up to Monday's meeting to determine the first response. Although

the CSEU is formally opposed to compulsory redundancy, union leaders are conscious of the financial constraints on BS, which is expected to lose £100m this year.

Although officially called by an advisory one and a half day decision on official resistance would have to be referred to the individual executives of the unions and to the CSEU executive itself.

Mr Niven of the technical administrative and supervisory section (TASS) told a meeting of Clyde ship stewards in Glasgow last night that Mr Atkinson had behaved like a little dictator, ignoring the advice of the CSEU, he is now insisting on compulsory redundancies.

Mr Niven said: "That TASS would be calling for action in opposition to any compulsory sackings" and said there had been a 20 per cent reduction in staff by voluntary means since 1977.

Mr Niven, whose union represents 7,000 white collar employees out of the total workforce of 70,000, said that because of exchange rate fluctuations the United Kingdom shipyards were at a 32 per cent disadvantage compared with the Japanese. "This is not an act of God but deliberate Government policy", he said.

Sterling
dips by
2½ cents

By Our Economics Staff

Fears of possible Soviet intervention in Poland and higher dollar interest rates sent the dollar soaring on foreign exchange markets yesterday, though it closed below its best levels.

The pound slumped heavily against the dollar and also lost ground against continental currencies. Dealers said speculation of an early reduction in minimum lending rate may have helped to close the dollar at \$2.2055, down nearly 2½ cents from Thursday. The effective exchange rate, as calculated by the Bank of England, fell 0.6 to 99.5 (average 1975=100).

After a quiet morning in European trading, news of the Federal funds rate and worse-than-expected United States wholesale price figures for March sparked off fresh dollar gains, to more than DM2.13 at one stage.

Profit-taking and possible intervention by the German Federal Bank late in the day brought the dollar below its best levels to close European trading at DM2.1220, up 1.20 pence from Thursday.

In London short-term interest rates continued to ease, and the Treasury bill rate dropped for the third week running from 11.5 to 11.4 per cent.

Nissan in talks with
components suppliers

By Clifford Webb

Midlands Industrial Correspondent

Senior executives from Nissan have started detailed negotiations with 80 British and European component manufacturers which will decide whether or not the Japanese motor group goes ahead with its plan to establish a £200m car plant in Britain.

Preliminary talks have been taking place in some secrecy. A United Kingdom component company executive said last night: "We are now getting down to the nitty gritty of prices, stability of delivery and quality."

Nissan gave the impression that the selection of a site for the plant and the starting costs were secondary considerations. The whole project will stand or fall on the response they get from component firms. In that respect most people seem to have forgotten that when Nissan refers to local content it is talking about suppliers from the whole of the EEC. British

firms face fierce competition," he added.

Preliminary talks have been conducted by Nissan Trading, the Brussels-based company which coordinates Nissan's imports into Europe. A more senior team has now taken over with the arrival in London this week of Mr Isamu Kawai, a Nissan managing director with a reputation as a start-up specialist. He is accompanied by nine colleagues.

For the past two days, Mr Kawai has been holding talks at the London headquarters of GKN. Next week he will meet Automotive Products and Associated Engineering representatives.

A target of six weeks has been set for the completion of the present round of talks.

Detailed drawings, specifications and quotation forms have been prepared in English and will be presented to would-be suppliers during this period with a request that particular attention be given to lead times.

Mr Kawai is emphasizing in his talks that the information required is only for a feasibility study and only if the project is approved will selected suppliers be asked to give firm quotations. In view of the two to three years' time span for the project, components companies are at present being asked only to give indications of their prices in 1983.

Bank union
threatens
to spread
disruption

By David Felton

Labour Reporter

The Banking, Insurance and Finance Union is threatening to spread disruption in pursuit of its pay claim despite acceptance of the employers' "find" 10 per cent offer by the rival Clearing Bank Union.

An emergency executive meeting of BIFU last night authorised a second round of industrial action involving about 8,000 staff in high street banks in several large provincial centres and the West End of London.

The decision on when to start the action will not be taken until after a meeting with the employers next Wednesday, Mr Leif Mills, the BIFU secretary, said that he had no doubt that a further meeting of the executive on Sunday week would launch the action if there was no improvement in the offer.

He also said that "the balance will tip up" if the employers decide to impose the 10 per cent offer on all staff as a result of acceptance by the Clearing Bank Union. That action could lead to the breakdown of the banking system.

The union executive agreed yesterday to build about 1,200 staff who work for a company in South Wales which services the Access credit card operation. Their pay traditionally is linked to the clearing banks, but so far the union has not received a response from the management to its 20 per cent claim.

It is thought that if the employers improved their offer to around 12 per cent by next Wednesday, it would be sufficient to call off the action. But last night the employers appeared firm in their resolve not to offer more to BIFU than has been accepted by the 90,000 members of the Clearing Bank Union.

The staff to take part in the latest disruption, which comes after last week's two one-day strikes in the Barclays and Lloyds computer centres, have been asked to make action, although it is understood that the majority was quite narrow.

The action will take the form of 24-hour strikes coupled with a work to rule and overtime ban. Areas to be hit outside London include Yorkshire, the Midlands, and the West Country.

The union's executive also agreed in principle to hold a ballot of all 75,000 members in the five main clearing banks on much wider action if the second phase fails to produce an improved offer.

Mr Mills was scathing of the Clearing Bank Union's acceptance of the 10 per cent offer. "The offer is linked to improvements in holidays

"If next Wednesday's meeting does not bring any improvement in the offer, then we are in for a very severe escalation of the industrial action. I hope that wiser and more responsible counsels will prevail in the banks, and I hope that the more hawkish members who lurk in the labyrinths of the City of London, will be defeated," he said.

Sharp increase in wholesale prices
shows US inflation still strong

From Frank Vogl

United States Economics Correspondent

Washington, April 3

Inflation in the United States is proving much more forceful than government economists expected. Figures out today showed a sharp rise in wholesale prices, which rose more rapidly in March than in any single month since last July.

Wholesale prices increased last month on a seasonally-adjusted basis by 1.3 per cent, after a 0.8 per cent rise in February.

Wholesale prices in the United States have increased by 10.5 per cent over the last 12 months, with the index now standing at 253.3 (1967=100).

The inflation figures are likely to cause concern in financial markets. Some analysts today suggested that the Federal Reserve Board could tighten its policies. Such fears were seen as being one of the reasons behind moves by numerous large banks to raise the interest rate they charge stockbrokers from 15 per cent to either 16 per cent or 16½ per cent.

Government economists had expected a substantial decline in economic activity in the first few months of this year and more stable prices. However, the economy appears to be performing more vigorously, partly because of special discount schemes to increase car sales.

At the same time, the decline by President Reagan to decontrol oil prices immediately is having a big effect on the inflation statistics.

The Bureau of Labour Statistics pointed out that wholesale energy prices rose by 6.1 per cent last month. Petrol prices were up by 7.5 per cent and home heating oil prices ahead by 9 per cent.

Figures for semi-finished goods and crude goods pointed to a more moderate trend for inflation in coming months. Wholesale food prices actually declined by 2.6 per cent last month.

Most encouraging of all was a 1.3 per cent fall in the wholesale price of crude goods after a 2.9 per cent rise in February. The sharp downward movement of these prices will have an influence in due course on the trends of all wholesale and eventually consumer prices.

However, the employment statistics have shown little change in recent months. Last month's 7.3 per cent jobless rate compares with a rate of 7.6 per cent in March 1980. The trend is viewed as better than expected by government officials, but the overall figures mask to some extent the high levels of unemployment among certain groups.

Today's figures showed that unemployment among teenagers in America is now 19.1 per cent, and the jobless rate among blacks is 13.7 per cent against 6.5 per cent for whites.

\$87,000m Reagan budget cuts backed

Washington, April 3.—The

United States Senate has given President Ronald Reagan his first big legislative victory by overwhelmingly approving his plan to cut \$87,000m (£38,670m) from federal spending over a three-year period.

With most Democratic Senators voting along with the Republicans, the final tally was 88 in favour of the budget cuts to 10 against.

The plan which calls for cuts of \$2,300m this year, \$36,900m next year, and \$47,700m in 1983 now goes to the House of Representatives, where political commentators expect it will also be approved, though probably by a closer margin.

Observers considered that the present wave of sympathy for the President after the assassination attempt played a large part in the Senators' unusually quick decision and the large majority. The vote came less than a month after Mr Reagan sent his final recommendations to the legislature.

Republicans, the majority party in the upper house, hailed the vote as "a historic turning point" in the battle for better control over Federal spending.

The spending cuts were faulted by a handful of liberal Democrats, including Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, who accused the Government of a "cruel abandonment" of the poor.

More than 20 amendments were proposed to try to restore funds for social programmes such as food stamps, school benefits, and unemployment. All the amendments were voted down.—Agence France Presse.

Decision
deferred on
THF bid
for Savoy

By Andrew Goodrick-Clarke

Financial Editor

A decision on whether Trusthouse Forte should be allowed to proceed with its scheme of arrangement bid for the Savoy Hotel has been deferred until next week.

Yesterday both sides appeared before the High Court Registrar and it was agreed, without detailed submissions being made, that the matter should be adjourned so that a ruling could be given by a judge.

Counsel for Trusthouse and the Savoy apparently were anxious that the matter should be decided before the Easter law vacation, and it is probable that a judge will consider the matter next week, possibly on Thursday.

It is the first time that a contested bid has been pursued under the scheme of arrangement provisions of section 206 of the Companies Act.

The effect, should Trusthouse win a favourable decision in the courts, is that it would call meetings of both the "A" and "B" shareholders in the Savoy.

Trusthouse knows that if it were able to win the approval of shareholders with 75 per cent of the "A" shares in the hotels group for its £58m bid, it would have 51 per cent of the total votes and thus control of the Savoy group.

However, it is recognized in the Savoy's articles that a capital stands some £5m above that at present offered by Trusthouse, and that if Trusthouse is given the go-ahead by the courts, the scheme would be open to follow the same route with a counterbid.

Sir Maxwell Joseph's Grand Metropolitan group is known to be watching the situation carefully, and has indicated that the price now being offered by Trusthouse is less than it would offer should it decide to counterbid.

An alternative is that the Savoy itself, together with Baring's, its advisers, may be talking to companies who would be considered more acceptable to the Savoy board should it become inevitable that control, presently held through the "B" capital, would have to be relinquished.

£2,340m offshore gas
pipe 'ready by 1985'

By Bill Johnston

Industrial Staff

Britain's 705-kilometre North Sea gas pipeline, now estimated to cost £2,340m, is expected to be in operation by early 1985.

This was disclosed in the latest report on the progress of the planned pipeline given to delegates from the oil and chemicals industry at a seminar in London yesterday.

The pipeline organizing group made up of representatives from British Gas, British Petroleum and Mobil Oil, along with Sir Jasper Holm, financial adviser to the group, presented a number of reports at the seminar.

The new plans reveal that the proposed pipeline has been shortened at its southern end and now only goes as far as the Lomond field instead of Fulmar. The southern section bore will be increased from 22 to 24 inches.

The pipeline now expected to come on line by early 1985 will have 11,000,000 million cu ft of gas available with the possibility of exploiting a further 10,000,000 million cu ft to 12,000,000 million cu ft.

It is still expected to land the gas to the offshore field at St Fergus, where outline planning consent has already been granted by the local authority.

The junction between the 210-kilometre off-shore section to St Fergus, the 345-kilometre northern section and the 150-kilometre shortened section, is now to be joined by an under-sea junction instead of a platform, as previously suggested.

Such an arrangement will enable the pipeline to carry 1,550 million cu ft of gas a day by 1990-91. Britain's average consumption is about 5,000 million cu ft a day.

The crucial question still to be answered about the pipeline is how it will be financed and who will take part in the scheme.

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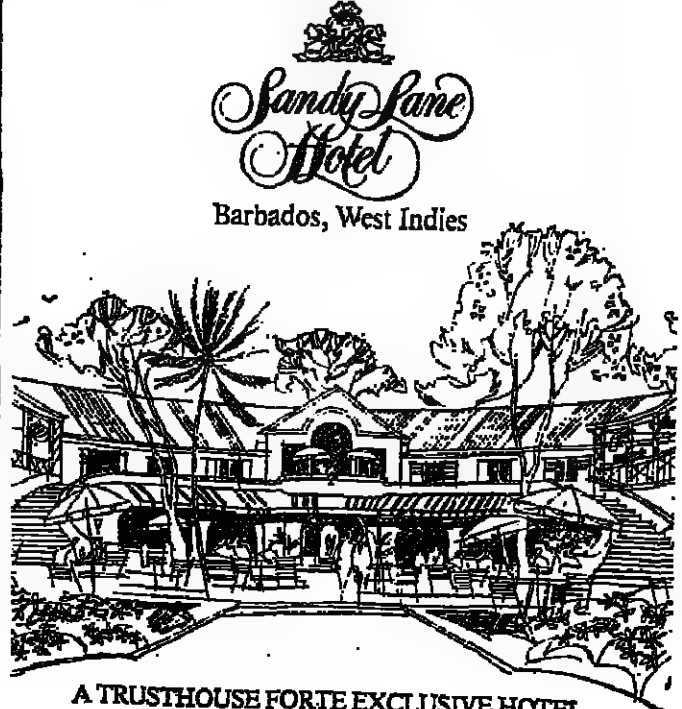
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S African millionaire behind Rothmans link-up with US tobacco maker
Reynolds deal awaits the Rupert touch

Whatever business relationship may be established between British-registered Rothmans International and R. J. Reynolds Industries, America's largest tobacco company, Dr Anton Rupert, the South African tobacco and breweries millionaire, will, on past form, play a pivotal role—and then quietly fade into the background.

Dr Rupert, the one-time cigarettes salesman is often described as one of the world's most powerful but secretive industrialists. He is now in talks with Mr Paul Sticht, Reynolds' chairman, which could lead to a merger of Rothmans and Reynolds. That would create a £6,000m operation, only slightly smaller than the world's largest tobacco-based group, BAT Industries.

Rothmans is effectively controlled through the complicated Rupert empire, which comprises a network of companies around the world, with interlocking shareholdings, mostly involved in tobacco, brewing and distilling. A 44 per cent hold-

ing in Rothmans lies with Rothmans Tobacco Holdings, which in turn is controlled by the Rupert Foundation, based in Luxembourg.

The holdings company and the foundation are key components of the Rupert empire, as is the South African company, the Rembrandt Group—named after the painter. Dr Rupert being an art connoisseur.

Although the Rupert interests could command more, their voting rights in Rothmans International have been restricted to 50 per cent on the partnership pattern to be found in all the overseas companies with which Dr Rupert has connections.

He is credited with saving many companies, with a strong guiding hand discernible at first. But once a company is on a rising trend, the Rupert formula has been to let the partners get on with it. At Rothmans International, few rumours, ever getting direct orders from Dr Rupert,

who at 64, still spends a large portion of his business time flying round the world to check on his diverse interests.

He regularly visits London, particularly because of his art and music interests, and he usually stays at the Savoy Hotel. Business acquaintances say he has changed little since his self-made beginnings selling Rothmans cigarettes in South Africa.

He bought local manufacturing rights from Rothmans to start up what is now claimed to be the fourth largest tobacco manufacturing group worldwide.

When in the early 1970s Rothmans International was created by putting together separate interests in Britain, West Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands—in all of which the Rupert empire had a share—Dr Rupert gained a reputation as a tough negotiator never afraid of going to the brink. It remains to be seen how far he will need to go with Reynolds.

Derek Harris

PERSONAL INVESTMENT AND FINANCE

Building societies

Interest rate cartel on the way out?

Just how relevant are the recommended interest rates of the Building Societies Association? Every time a change is called for, the 36-strong BSA council deliberates the pros and cons of this or that investment or share rate and then spends just as long deciding what the matching mortgage rate should be. After that they all disperse to their offices and instructions go out about the rate changes.

But the interest rates that emerge in practice are often very different. At the present, about half of all new mortgages granted are at a higher rate than the recommended mortgage rate of 13 per cent and the number of savings schemes and investment opportunities offering more than the recommended share of 8.5 per cent are now almost beyond count. So what price the recommended rate structure?



Mr Leonard Williams, chairman of the Building Societies Association.

Mr Leonard Williams, chief executive of the Nationwide Building Society and chairman of the association, grasped this particular nettle a couple of days ago. While other building society men are still defending the recommended rate structure, he said that the interest rate "cartel" seemed unlikely to stand up much longer under the pressure of external and internal competition.

In short, building societies are being caught in the pincer of competition—from the Government, with its enhanced National Savings schemes, and from the banks, with their mortgage business.

Abbey National's own purpose-built homes, 24 houses in Tower Hamlets, are complete and occupied. They were built by the Abbey Housing Association, an independent body sponsored by Abbey National, to provide a mixture of privately rented and owner-occupied housing in inner-city areas.

Offers

New gift unit trusts are still being launched. The latest, on offer this weekend, is Legal and General's Gift Unit Trust. Also on offer in the realm of high interest funds is Arbuthnot Securities' Preference Share Fund.

At the other end of the spectrum, Framlington's Unit Management is recommending its Capital Trust, while both London Life Assurance, a leading non-commission paying life office, and M & G Group are promoting a comprehensive range of services and products.

Taxation

Finance Bill sheds light on your perks

At about 10 yesterday morning two grey copies of the Finance Bill thudded on to our desks. Immediately, we started picking our way through it, clause by clause, to see what pleasant or nasty surprises the Chancellor had slipped in which were not clear from his Budget statement.

No doubt, over the next few weeks other nuggets of information will be discovered and the tax avoidance industry will start the annual process of looking for meanings that the parliamentary draftsmen could never have dreamed were in the legislation.

Meanwhile, here are some points from the Bill which were clear in the Budget proposals.

Company cars: from 1982-83 there will be a new extra cash equivalent for higher paid employees and directors for the private petrol provided by an employer. The amounts will be the subject of a Treasury Order and the Inland Revenue is now canvassing opinions on how this benefit should be assessed and the ways in which tax should be deducted by employers.

Credit Tokens: these are basically credit cards and any expense incurred by an employee via a company credit card will be treated as part of his taxable salary. This will include not only services and goods and so on, but also any service charge or interest. So it will be important to make certain that your employer pays your company credit card bills on time.

Sickness Benefit Schemes: all sickness payments made by employers are to be taxable as earned income. This stops the operation of one particular sickness benefit insurance scheme. But for higher paid employees there is good news about permanent health insurance schemes in general. The premiums on any permanent health insurance scheme will not now be taxable as income in kind. Before, if the employee had the benefit as of right, rather than at his employer's discretion, the premium was a taxable benefit.

Season Tickets: as we already knew from the Budget, season tickets bought for use by employees earning less than £8,500 a year are to become fully taxable perks from April 6, 1982. However, in the small print of the Bill, the Revenue is requiring employers to report which employees have received season tickets in 1981-82.

Investment in new trading companies: the much vaunted income tax relief for investment in trading companies is set about with so many restrictions that one must seriously question its usefulness. The prohibitions are much worse than even the Budget statement indicated.

The £10,000 a year upper limit on the total value of these investments applies to single people or jointly to married couples (yet another reason to stay unmarried). The scheme seems really to apply only to financial service businesses or to manufacturing and even this last is open to some doubt because there is a prohibition on "dealing in goods" as a substantial part of the trade.

Not more than a total 30 per cent of the capital of a company

can qualify for this particular tax relief. Moreover, no individual investor who claims the relief can control more than 30 per cent of the capital directly or indirectly and this includes any loan made to the company. So, if the company got into trouble and required capital, no one with 30 per cent of the shares, or approaching that level, who had already received the tax relief could put more money in by way of, say, loans without losing their relief.

It also appears that the business must be a new trade for the controlling shareholder. He must not control any other trade of the same kind or serving the same markets.

So anxious are the authorities to create pristine new businesses, that they clearly reject giving any help to the kind of investor who might already have been tempted to take a chance—very often these would be members of the businessman's own family. Nor do they seem to want people to enter businesses in which they already have some experience.

Capital Gains Tax: The Finance Bill tries to plug a loophole which appeared as a result of last year's capital gains tax legislation. When a person makes a gift of any capital gain arising could be held over until the donee disposed of the gifted asset. An obvious ploy was for the donee to go abroad, become non-resident and then dispose of the asset free of CGT.

The Bill therefore contains a provision covering all gifts made after April 5, 1981, where there is a held-over gain and the donee emigrates and then disposes of the asset within six years. His gain, of course is not taxed, but the held-over gain would be subject to CGT and the Inland Revenue can look to the donor for the tax.

So, if you are making a gift and holding over the CGT in this way, make sure that you can get the tax off the donee if he skips abroad—or at least get some kind of indemnity. If you can make it subject to a gift in the next 24 hours, it will escape this particular provision.

Capital Gains Tax and Overseas Trusts: In general, the CGT position of overseas trusts seems to have been clarified to some extent in marked contrast to the income tax provisions introduced in another part of the Bill. Broadly speaking, the old rule was that overseas trust gains could be divided up among the beneficiaries. Now, the beneficiaries will be taxed according to the extent that they receive capital from the trust.

Every year the gains of an overseas trust will be calculated as if the trust were a United Kingdom trust and then carried forward to following years. These accumulated trust gains become chargeable only when the beneficiaries receive capital distributions from the trust or to the extent that they have already received capital which has not been subject to CGT.

Danby Bloch and Raymond Godfrey

HOFF of HEYBRIDGE HEATH

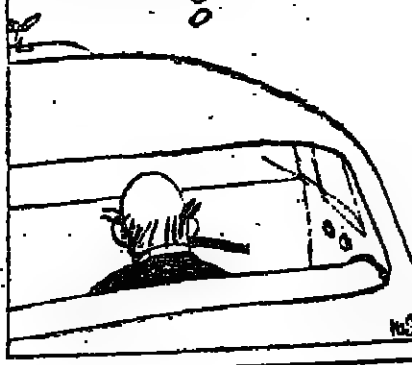
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THE LAWNMOWER!



Double or quits

'Cresting' into the unlisted market

I accept the verdict of the stock market with the same wisdom that Canute showed on the beach, but only sometimes do I agree with it. Now is one of those times.

Just before the Budget I wondered aloud whether our monetarist lawyer-Chancellor, known for sticking to his brief, would rise to the occasion, and for all the good he did he might have set sail and said nothing.

But the market took this minor episode in its stride. It knows that company profits are among the first things to rise (and rise fast) when the

	Buying price	Winners Price now	Date bought	Action
Westland	471p	144p	1.12.79	hold
M. J. Gleeson	61p	91p	17.8.81	hold
Vickers	162p	175p		hold
Myson	50p	40p	6.9.80	hold

business cycle turns and it also knows that the Government has no intention of losing the next election. It is already nearly two years old. Personally, I think that this market has in FT index terms

are behaving so well that I am tempted to say that there is nothing to report, but that phrase has a slightly suspect ring since Mussolini used it to cover his defeat at the hands of the Greeks. However, the little table speaks for itself and I counsel you to continue holding them all.

You could also consider another stock, Crest International Securities. No, this is not for those who stick to the highways. Yes, it is for those who occasionally explore byways and on the stock exchange that means the unlisted securities market.

This is, I should warn you, a market where shares are in but where companies are small, official information sometimes sparse.

Crest is a way of betting two men, Tom Farmer and Alec Stenson, the change bet the stock market high. It's a bet on the change bet the stock market high. It's a bet on the change bet the stock market high. It's a bet on the change bet the stock market high.

Peter Wainwright

Reinvesting 'frozen' pension contributions

In 1970, at the age of 42, I changed my employment. My contributions to two earlier pension funds were earning 3 per cent per annum. My present employers were unable to arrange a transfer so I decided to withdraw my frozen contributions and reinvest them in guaranteed investment bonds.

For example, I purchased a 20-year deferred annuity with Noble Lowndes (now part of the Hill Samuel Group) for £500. At the age of 62, in June, 1990, I shall be able to choose between an annuity of £229.50 per annum or a cash option of £2,325. At present I have no immediate need of the capital which I invested in bonds. If I were to withdraw it now I would receive £500, and the original investment plus 40 per cent interest per annum.

Inflation is rapidly eroding the value of the annuity which I envisage would make a small but significant contribution to my eventual retirement pension.

Is there anything I can do to improve the return on this investment or should I retain it until it matures? (JWS, Northampton)

From the details you provide it would seem that the terms on withdrawal of your bond now are significantly less favourable than you would enjoy if you left it to run its full course. This means that you would have to earn a high yield on any alternative investment to make it worth while. The further interest rates fall the more difficult it becomes to achieve this.

The comparison may be complicated by tax considerations, too, and you will need to bear this in mind. You will be able to obtain information about the alternative investments available from an insurance broker, since the size of your investment restricts you to insurance com-

pany bonds or unit trusts. If you do not have a contract with a broker, you can obtain information about registered brokers in your area from the British Insurance Brokers Association (tel: 01-623 9043).

I would be interested to have your comments on the following occurrence.

Some weeks ago my husband and I agreed to invest £7,000-£10,000 in American currency. We shall need this (to us) substantial amount in mid-April. While in our bank, I was quoted 20 per cent fixed for four months (dollar rate 2.303). I gave signed instructions for investing £10,000, and proceeded with my shopping.

However, it transpired that the bank had made a mistake; after buying the dollars, our local bank found that 20 per cent applied to one month money. They accordingly rang my husband at home, and he proceeded with the correct rate of 18 per cent.

Could we have held the bank to the original signed and agreed bargain? (JC, Kent)

If the bank clerk actually offered you the higher interest rate, then the bank has been guilty of an acceptance of that offer then at that point a legally binding agreement came into existence. So prima facie the bank is obliged to pay you the rate of interest originally quoted.

However, it is likely that the bank would insist that what their clerk told you was not intended as an offer but that your signed instructions constituted the legal offer. If your discussion with the bank clerk amounted merely to preliminary negotiations, then the bank was not obliged to accept your offer contained in your written instructions. In this case their telephone call amounted to a rejection of your offer coupled with a counter-offer for interest

Readers' Forum

This specialist readers' service has been compiled with the help of Ronald Irving, Joan Drummond and Tony Foreman

at a lower rate which it appears your husband accepted.

Another possible bar to a legal contract coming into existence would arise, if you were aware the bank clerk had made a mistake in quoting the higher rate. If so you would not be entitled to accept his offer.

My parents are old age pensioners living in Scotland. As my father retired late, his state pension is rather higher than the standard rate. They are planning to go and live permanently in France. Can you tell me whether their British pension would be payable direct to them in France or whether, once they have residence permits, there is any reciprocal Common Market arrangement that will entitle them to French benefits? (JW, London SW13.)

Your parents should write to the Department of Health and Social Security Overseas Division (Newcastle upon Tyne NE98 1XX), giving details of what they intend to do. The DHSS will then arrange to pay the pension directly to them in France.

As they are retiring to France, your parents will also enjoy the annual increase in their pension linked to the rise in the retail price index. Pensioners who retire outside the EEC boundaries are often excluded from this benefit—for example those lured by the sunny beaches of Australia, New Zealand or South Africa.

Can a person use his walking stick to ward off an attack, if for example, he is being mugged? I asked this because my younger son (who is well over six feet tall) took the stick job he could get after failing his university entrance and is now a uniformed "security guard" at a dance hall—in other words what we used to call a "bouncer".

Naturally, I was very worried when he mentioned that a colleague had been threatened by a drunken man with a bottle and I advised him to carry a baton in the pocket of his trousers to protect himself. His employer, however, forbids him using anything for his defence. This seems hardly fair, as I understand that security guards are allowed truncheons as part of their uniform. Would you care to comment? (DM, Dorchester.)

The carrying of an offensive weapon in a public place (such as the street or in a dance hall or even behind the counter in a shop) was made an offence by the Prevention of Crimes Act, 1953. Only where there is lawful authority (as in the case of the police) or reasonable excuse does possessing a weapon cease to be an offence. Your son would find it hard to establish reasonable excuse. The courts have already stated that a security guard may not

carry a weapon even a matter of routine or as part of his uniform or as a deterrent. Your son would have to show that there was "an imminent threat" to himself—for example, that he reasonably felt that a person who had threatened violence was likely to return. However, if you were attacked, he would be tied to pick up any object at hand—a stick for example—to deter or ward off attack.

As a member of the pu you may certainly use an attacker an article you I with you for lawful purpose such as an umbrella or walking stick, provided that its use is limited to self-defence.

The house in which I live is related and the Inland Revenue has agreed that it comes within section 33 (4) (a) & (b), Finance Act 1977.

In June, 1972, I purchased a house which is my only main residence but is let part of my occupation in course of my occupation. I am, however, commissioning the house for sale to buy another and I am not clear as to whether the exemption from capital gains would apply to the whole or increase in value or only part of the gain deemed to have occurred since July 31, 1972.

I should be most grateful if you could clarify the position for me (LEB, York).

I am afraid that the exemption is only available for part of the gain. The gain will be apportioned on a time basis, so that if, for example, you were to sell July 1981 the chargeable proportion would be approximately 51 months times the overall gain.

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Spending

The way the money goes

In Mr Macmillan's immortal words, we have never had it so good. That, at least, is the conclusion to be drawn from the National Income and Expenditure accounts for the fourth quarter of 1980, which were published last week.

They showed that total personal income before tax rose by 18 per cent during 1980 and that, even after allowing for inflation, personal disposable income rose by 2 per cent in the year. So, whatever the pundits may say about recession, de-industrialization and impending economic collapse, most of us, it seems, are still doing very nicely.

Well, of course, there are lies, damn lies and statistics; and the elusive Mr Average who emerges from these figures probably bears no relation to any human being known to you or me—such as not only old Joe down the road, who has peaked last year and is now trying to make ends meet on supplementary benefit, but also old George over the hill, who left his job with an £80,000 handsake last week and whose contribution to the national accounts over the next two months—the cruising season—will take the form of "expenditure abroad".

And what about young Eleanor, who found herself her first job at £7,000 a year three months ago and is feeling quite unreasonably rich, and not-so-young Marianne, whose pay rose by 50 per cent two years ago but by only 5 per cent last year. She is starting to feel quite disagreeably poor.

Mr Average is still basking in the memory of a 15 per cent rise in his real disposable income between 1977 and 1979; but his feet started turning cold roughly half way through 1979 and they have been getting colder since. Hence the rise in the savings ratio, from an average of 14.1 per cent in 1979 to an average 15.3 per cent last year. In the third quarter of the year it was as high as 17.1 per cent.

Mind you, that savings ratio, rather like the existence of Mr

Average, has to be taken with a pinch of salt. It looks as though it represents the results of long, detailed and deep research into the nation's bank and building society deposits—but so much thing. All it represents is what is left over after all the known items of expenditure have been extracted from personal income after tax.

So what was the Average family spending its money on in 1980? Compared with those for 1970, the figures make fascinating reading. It was a decade in which, notwithstanding economic crisis notwithstanding, disposable incomes rose by 30 per cent in real terms and, as might be expected, that left people with more money for the joys, as opposed to the necessities, of life.

So Mr and Mrs Average and family spent only 17.6 per cent of their income on food in 1980, as opposed to 20.5 per cent in 1970—and that even though they developed more expensive tastes (spending on food, in real terms, rose by just over 5 per cent over the decade). Spending on housing, reflecting higher mortgage rates and council rents, went up by a whopping 18.5 per cent, but it still represented only 14 per cent of the Average family's expenditure in 1980, as opposed to 14.5 per cent in 1970. The Average spent less of their income on fuel and light, too (4.2 per cent against 4.8 per cent in 1970).

Where did all the extra income go? Well, it went on wine, women and song. You can see why the Chancellor felt he might without undue injustice put a few bob on a bottle of wine and a few more on a bottle of spirits, when you look at the pattern of expenditure on alcohol over the past 10 years. As against the 6.3 per cent of Average income which it absorbed in 1970, by 1980 it took 7.5 per cent, reflecting a rise in spending in real terms of almost 50 per cent.

Expenditure on clothing and footwear went up in real terms

by more than a third, to absorb 8.7 per cent of the Average family's income, as against 7.5 per cent in 1970. Unfortunately, there is no breakdown for 1980 yet, but in 1979 laundries and dry cleaning establishments took no less than £99m; and a mid-bling £677m was spent on hairdressing, manicure and beauty care.

As for the song, in real terms expenditure on radio and electrical goods more than doubled over the decade, and by 1980 it was absorbing 3.15 per cent of the Average family's income, as opposed to only 1.6 per cent in 1970. (Is this a case of fiddling while Rome burns?)

Spending on cars and motor cycles in contrast, has been going up and down like a yo-yo all the way through the decade (by the final quarter of 1980 it was lower, in real terms, than at any time during the preceding three years).

There is one vice, however, to which greater money has not given greater rise and that is smoking. Expenditure on tobacco has not risen at all, in real terms, and it now absorbs only 3.8 per cent of the Average family's income, as opposed to 4.6 per cent a decade ago. The money may still disappear like water, but at least no more of it (in real terms) is going up in smoke.

The question now is whether alcohol is to go through the same sea change. In real terms expenditure on wines and spirits was lower in the final quarter of 1980 than in the corresponding period of 1979; and while this is not unusual in a recession, so was the expenditure on beer. This is so unprecedented that even the solemn statisticians of the Central Statistical Office felt obliged to note the fact.

In real terms, spending on the cinema has halved over the past decade. Is the pub to become an anachronism too? And what will that do to our standard of living?

Adrienne Gleeson

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Arbuthnot PREFERENCE SHARE FUND

PERSONAL INVESTMENT AND FINANCE 2

Spring thoughts of portfolios

So the great panic is over. Fiendish Hongkong businessman Sir John G. Grimpen has failed to convince that life in the village of Socklepath as we know it will never be the same again. And the *deus ex machina* was Poggles, the dachshund of the Baskervilles, who reinforced her claims for being psychic by causing him to fall head first into the Great Grimpen Mire and thus lose face in every respect.

It being spring, the thoughts of the Investment Club Committee have now lightly turned to a review of their portfolio. Curiously enough, while nobody was looking at it, it seems to have done rather well—a fairly typical testimony to the pervasiveness of investment in general. Readers will recall that the sum of £100,000 was invested by the club in January 1980. Then, under the troubled management of merchant bankers, Wolfbane Lustwort, the value fell to £80,000 and thus below the bank's minimum limit. Since then, however, pottering along on its own, the portfolio has risen to its original level of £100,000 again.

Moreover, with the profit on the Great Rockall and Hongkong sale, plus that on sugar dealing, plus all the dividends and interest that have accrued so far, there is now a total of £116,000 in the kitty.

The dread question of what to do with the income thus caused to be deferred any longer, so yet another row threatens to split the village. One school of thought is to follow the fashion and use the £16,000 to buy up the Dartmoor Globe and Argus, but there are few who relish a tangle with the Monopolies Commission on that account.

Meanwhile a running battle is continuing between Kevin Luddite, favouring a memorial to the Socklepath martyrs who fell into the berry-churning machinery at Allied Elderberry in 1882—and in the blue corner, Colonel Rudolph Grog-Bevington, who urges the purchase of yet more Allied Elderberry shares in order to support the price.

However, a break-through has been made by Sam Spender and Brian Thrift, working in unlikely harness towards the new



with-out concept of supporting small industries. They have proposed that £20,000 of the £26,000 now on deposit should be used to set up a fund to back local entrepreneurs in setting up small businesses and

that notices inviting applications should be posted in all villages within a ten mile radius.

A last week's committee meeting at the Shilling further suggested that the club's holding in Tiny Business Units, which does more or less the same thing only on a national scale, should be sold to boost the size of their own local fund.

The proposal was accepted with great enthusiasm and the fund thus rose to £30,000.

Naturally, the alacrity with which all members of the committee endorsed this suggestion has not a little to do with the fact that every, single one of them has his or her own pet scheme in the back of their mind, by which to benefit either by financial or indirect means.

So the jockeying for position among the sponsors of the various proposals will doubtless renew the intense infighting for which the village is justly famed and compared with which this passing sweetness and light is all too uncharacteristic.

Francis Kinsman

Unit trust performance

The tables show the value on April 1 of £100 invested 12 months ago (A) and three years ago (B), income reinvested and based on offer-offer prices. Figures supplied by Planned Savings, 150-152 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BD.

FINANCIAL

	A	B		A	B
Henderson Financial	174.5	206.2	Barclays/Unicredit Cptd	133.6	153.3
Target/Invest Trust	135.5	187.6	Baring Bros Strato	133.2	167.3
Arthurton Capital	123.9	202.7	Antony Gibbs Mkt Ldr	132.7	131.1
M&G/Fits	123.9	191.2	Hill Samuel/Capital	132.5	155.8
Hill Samuel/Financial	149.9	182.6	Garmore/High Inc	132.3	157.0
Nat West/Financial	149.6	161.2	Garmore/High Inc	132.3	157.0
S&P/UITU	149.6	173.7	Midland Drayton Cap	132.0	145.9
Brown Shipley Finance	149.6	181.2	New Court Equity	131.1	143.0
Barclays/Unicredit Fin	147.3	217.6	Antony Gibbs Growth	130.9	135.2
Nat West/Financial	147.3	217.6	London Wall Cap Gth	130.9	135.2
S&P/UITU	147.3	217.6	A-Hamro/Recov Snt	130.7	171.9
Brown Shipley Finance	147.3	217.6	Antony Gibbs Growth	130.6	135.0
Barclays/Unicredit Fin	147.3	217.6	London Wall Cap Gth	130.6	135.0
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AtoI Nos respectively: 381B, 036BCD 762B, 1245B, 778B/7808/1105B/1452.					
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